Commentary

Volume Fifty-five, Number Five, May 1973

A Symposium

Edward C. Banfield
Nathan Glazer
Michael Harrington
Tom Kahn
Christopher Lasch
Robert Lekachman
Bayard Rustin
Gus Tyler
George F. Will

Nixon, The Great Society & The Future of Social Policy

Zionism Revisited / David Vital • Hillel Halkin

The Curious Analyzer / John P. Sisk

"An American Family" / Sara Sanborn

Movie Chronicle / William S. Pechter

An Exchange on Open Admissions / Martin Mayer & Critics

Books in Review:
Robert Alter
Josiah Lee Auspitz
Arthur A. Cohen
Bernard K. Johnpoll

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from TV Guide—then discuss the idea with
your school officials.

CLASSROOM TV SHOW BANNED IN BOSTON

Not all instructional television is as dull as it used to be

On TV screens in thousands of classrooms this January, 8-to-10-year-old pupils will see a small drama about a little girl their age who loses her grandmother. Some of the action:

As relatives gather for the funeral, Linda and her cousins play in the family's front yard. One game is "Bang, bang, you're dead!" Linda gets "shot," falls to the ground and lies motionless a few moments, briefly alarming her playmates. Later her parents try to explain to her what it means to die. She asks them, "Are *you* going to die?" "Some day," her mother answers gravely. At the graveside, Linda hears the minister intone, "There is a time to live and a time to die."

Could be an episode of *As the World Turns*? Or *Edge of Night*?

Could be. But it's actually a 15-minute film produced by public-TV station KETC in St. Louis. It is part of a 30-episode educational TV series to be distributed in the U.S. and Canada by the National Instructional Television Center of Bloomington, Ind.

Classroom TV, often disparaged in academic and TV circles as a glittering promise that never got beyond mediocrity, is still around. It is, in fact, alive and well in many communities, and actually looking a little healthier.

It's a shoestring operation, to be sure, getting little aid from big government and philanthropic spenders, partly because Uncle Sam has never seen fit to make televised teaching a major funding beneficiary and partly because local school boards are too harried by rising educational costs to shell out much money for what seems to them a teaching frill.

Still, a few agencies like NIT are managing to crank out moderately successful contributions to a growing library of ETV materials. Founded in 1965 with Federal assistance, the center is now a self-supporting operation with nearly 700 hours of ETV programming available on a rental basis to the country's 210-or-so public-TV stations. Each year NIT assembles a consortium of underwriters to produce a new series of programs. The 31 participating sponsors include state departments of education, ETV networks and commissions, and Canada's Province of Ontario.

Costing a mere $600,000—roughly the amount a big commercial network spends for two runs of a prime-time movie—*Inside/Out*, as the forthcoming 30-episode series is called, is described by NIT as "the most extensive project ever undertaken in North American classroom television." (*Sesame Street* and *The Electric Company* are not in the same category because they are designed primarily for at-home rather than in-school viewing, although both are seen in many schools.)

Inside/Out is more ambitious than earlier NIT projects in several respects. Through little slice-of-life vignettes (such as one called "Must I/May I," picturing situations in which children struggle with their sense of responsibility), the programs will seek to provide a framework for classroom discussions of children's social, emotional and physical concerns. Months of research into schoolroom needs, according to Kent Owen, one of NIT's publications editors, found students and teachers "bored to death with blood and bones, things with no direct bearing on the children's lives," and crying out for ways to "feel through" children's inner feelings. *Inside/Out*, Owen believes, "is going to open up discussions in classrooms as they've never been opened up before. We're not dismissing the need for cognitive materials, but simply trying to deal with human feelings for a change."

The idea has brought educators running, the NIT official claims. "We didn't have to go out and twist arms on this one. The agencies and states came rushing in to participate." An unexpected windfall came from Exxon: a $200,000 grant to NIT to pay for printing and distribution of teacher guides and classroom aids.

Sample programs for the series have been field-tested in 10 localities, from Salem, Ore., and Fresno, Cal., to St. Louis, Chicago, Toronto and Boston. Altogether, 4000 children viewed five test shows.

The academic acceptance apparently has been exceptional. "We're flabbergasted at the enthusiastic response by the teachers," Owen reports. He admitted that some Boston schoolmarms had found the episode on death "inappropriate" and said they would not show it to their pupils. "Actually we're encouraged," the NIT man laughed, "to think we could produce something that would be 'banned in Boston'."

Assignments to produce shows for the series were parceled out by NIT to WNVT, the Northern Virginia Educational Television station in Annandale; WVIZ, the metropolitan Cleveland ETV station; the Kentucky Educational Television Network; St. Louis's KETC-TV; and the Ontario Educational Communications Authority. Dr. Orvis Harrelson, health-services director for the Tacoma, Wash., public schools, is serving as chief consultant.

The participating agencies have put up $450,000. NIT will try to get back the remaining $150,000 in fees from stations. Edwin Cohen, NIT's executive director, believes every public-TV station in the U.S. with daytime school service—a handful do not air such programming—will carry *Inside/Out*.

Is there some way NIT will have of gauging the classroom impact of the programs? "Oh, yes," Cohen reported. "The consortium members keep a close eye on how the programs are used in the classrooms and get back reports from teachers. You might say we have our own form of Nielsen ratings."

And NIT is confident, he implied, that *Inside/Out* is going to be ETV's 1973 hit show. END

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

The Question of Open Admissions

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Martin Mayer ["Higher Education for All? The Case of Open Admissions," February] breezed into a Hunter College Urban Affairs freshman class for twenty minutes, saw part of a slide presentation, and reported it as fourth-grade "show-and-tell" and as exhibiting an all-too-casual acceptance of resulting student rhetoric. What really goes on in the freshman course? Why would a *college* course ask students to produce and screen color slides?

The course, "Urban Life: The Personal and Observational View," was developed before the advent of Open Admissions. We felt that a freshman seminar in urban affairs that stresses the critical examination of personal observations might prove educationally exciting to student and instructor alike. To do this, we wanted to utilize the most efficient and absorbing methods to help students learn about the city. To be sure, we operated on an educational bias that questioned the traditional freshman diet of "integrated" social-science survey lectures, enriched, perhaps, by timid exposure of students to films and an occasional field trip. Instead, we felt students would be better served in a freshman seminar incorporating a series of first-hand exposures, in and outside of the classroom, to real here-and-now urban issues. We believed that skilled instructors could move students beyond the pablum of cocktail-party wisdom and street smartness about city life, its problems and solutions, and challenge students to think critically and deeply about them.

The coming of Open Admissions provided the propitious moment to introduce the course on an experimental basis and to secure some of the resources in staff and program funds necessary to launch it. Since then the course has become a regular part of the college's curriculum.

One of the exercises in the course concerns "Observation of Visual Contrasts," and contains the color slides mentioned by Mr. Mayer. Teams of two students each are asked to investigate contrasting aspects of city life and report findings in a slide presentation, including their own analysis of the reasons for the contrasts. One student team, for example, documented "Sunday Afternoon at 2:00" on a block in East Harlem and on another block in Staten Island. The contrasts were there to be seen in their obvious and subtle manifestations, and the resulting discussion tried to find reasons for this contrast and sought to define and understand the variety of life styles. Readings, analytical exercises, and lectures followed in subsequent sessions.

The course utilizes a text of readings and a workbook somewhat after the model of a lab manual in the natural sciences, containing a few dozen exercises. These exercises deal with tasks such as field interviews concerning specific urban issues, detecting urban themes in literature, analyzing children's views of the city, investigating two census tracts, doing a simple land-use survey, analyzing a crisis situation, visiting a suburban new town, debating the need for public housing, exploring the variety of change strategies employed by ethnic organizations, etc. The course proceeds by lectures, small group discussions, field trips, video-taping, photography, taped cassette montages (yes, even the rock music that upset Mr. Mayer), guest appearances, role-playing, brief written assignments and longer papers. Our evidence indicates that students like the course, that they put forth amazing effort, and that they learn. Concepts such as "community," "social change," "population characteristics," "life style," "economy," etc. become not merely dismembered definitions that some outside authority has cast into scholarly cement, but ideas associated with first-hand experiences.

No one familiar with urban youth, including Mr. Mayer, should be surprised that racial, ethnic, and social rhetoric enter these discussions. An East Harlem youth trying to explain why his block is different from that of his Staten Island colleague must abstract, must generalize, and frequently he will fall into the trap

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of the single-factor rhetoric. He may fervently represent a politically radical point of view, as have several of our students. The instructor's role at this point is not to stop the rhetoric, but to help the class to examine the phenomenon under discussion. Rhetoric that is relevant to a given subject should not and cannot be banished at the classroom door; it must be welcomed as a legitimate datum worthy of articulation and examination. Mr. Mayer correctly quoted Professor Spiegel as saying, "Rhetoric is the first rung up the abstraction ladder," but he dropped the final part of the thought, "It's up to the instructor to help the class test the rhetoric."

After two and a half years teaching this course we have come to the following convictions: 1) a freshman course in urban affairs need not be the traditional rendition of lectures conveying basic concepts in political science, social psychology, sociology, and geography. A truly integrated course stressing experience-based learning can be exciting for student and instructor. 2) Such a course should not be designed "for Open Admissions only." Some of our most enthusiastic students have been bright, advantaged middle-class kids finding unusual personal and academic challenge in the class. 3) The instructor in such a course is, of course, the crucial variable in its success. The instructor must have a thorough and broad-gauged intellectual grasp of his subject matter, but more, he must have an unusual degree of academic integrity and pedagogical skill.

Open Admissions, and specific courses such as Urban Life, should be critically examined, but not by the hit-and-run tactics that dismiss a whole course of studies, within the space of a brief paragraph, as Third-World gesturing and fourth-grade "show-and-tell." We shudder to think what Mr. Mayer would say about some of our graduate courses in Urban Planning where we build models of city blocks, engage in simulated games, and give numerous field trips. He might well view such activities as belonging in kindergarten. If the substance of a course is not examined in relation to the form, a very distorted view results. We think Mr. Mayer missed the substance and caricatured the form of our freshman course.

OLIVER J. GRAY
SEYMOUR Z. MANN
HANS B. C. SPIEGEL
Department of Urban Affairs
Hunter College, CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Because of the serious nature of the false statements regarding City College in Martin Mayer's article on Open Admissions and because the article has the appearance of careful research and accurate reporting, I feel compelled, as Associate Dean and Coordinator of the Open Admissions Program at City, to correct a few of the more glaring errors. Mr. Mayer's conclusions rest, in part, on statements about City College—statements that are simply not true.

Mr. Mayer states that the City College administration "has forbidden the imposition of prerequisites." In another context he refers to "City College removing *all* [emphasis his] prerequisites to courses in the humanities and social sciences. . . ." And he concludes: "With the elimination of all degree requirements other than numbers and the removal of prerequisites from all courses at places like City College, the chance to collect empty credits has been multiplied and so has the chance to collect empty diplomas." These statements are simply not true. The administration of City College does *not* impose degree or course requirements; that is the faculty's function and the faculties have not recommended such changes. Contrary to Mr. Mayer's article, our basic courses in English composition, study skills, and mathematics carry few or no credits. Students earn only 2 credits for four semester hours in English. College Study Skills I carries only one credit for four semester hours. Three courses in mathematics for science students meeting four and five hours per week carry a total of only 3 credits—the credits are for those portions of the second and third courses that have been defined traditionally as college-level mathematics. And, incidentally, contrary to Mr.

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Mayer's allegations, the Board of Higher Education has brought no pressure at all on us in connection with remedial course credit policy.

Simply stated: There have been no changes in degree and curricular requirements at City College since Open Admissions. The distribution requirements for degrees continue. There continue to be graduation requirements with respect to mathematics, foreign languages, English proficiency, and speech proficiency, and we continue to have the additional and usual curricular requirements in our several degree programs. Mr. Mayer was badly misinformed and, unfortunately, he did not check his facts with the record or with college officials familiar with the facts.

Mr. Mayer seems to want to prove that university and college officials and faculties are quite willing to cheapen their degrees in order to produce a superficial success for Open Admissions. Mr. Mayer could easily have learned that this is contrary to the entire thrust at City College where we have solid, academically responsible programs for all our students —from those with substantial basic-skills problems to those who achieve advanced placement and enter into accelerated degree programs. There are difficult and complex educational problems. But we are responding to these problems as an institution with educational, not political, objectives. Mr. Mayer's conclusion regarding "empty diplomas" would be true if his factual premises were true. But they are false. To offer to our students an easy degree without the education to which it attests would be a disservice to them.

ALAN FIELLIN
The City College, CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Martin Mayer's article is marred by inaccuracies that are bound to give a seriously distorted impression of City College, specifically. As chairman of City's mathematics department for the last three years, I know two things first-hand: first, for his information about credit or no credit for remedial course work or about prerequisites, Mr. Mayer did not go directly to the department, which after all administers this work; second, he gives explicit misinformation concerning these matters at City College.

Specifically, he indicates that at City College (as opposed to, say, Hunter), college credit is given both for remedial and non-remedial course work. The facts: For our five remedial mathematics courses, each of which meets four hours per week, the credits are: 0, 0, 0, 1, 2. (The last course, a precalculus course, contains some college-level material.) Normally, a four-hour course would carry 4 (or 3, or 5) college credits.

Mr. Mayer also writes: "With the elimination of all degree requirements other than numbers and the removal of prerequisites from all courses at places like City College, . . ." How's that again? Certainly there has been no change in requiring appropriate prerequisites for mathematics courses; and the degree requirements include a specific "distribution requirement" in basic courses in various stated areas (at least 12 credits in basic sciences, at least 21 in basic humanistic subjects, at least 9 in social sciences), plus specialization requirements of elective courses (e.g., at least 24 post-calculus credits for a mathematics major). See pp. 14-17 of the current college bulletin. . . .

FRITZ STEINHARDT
Mathematics Department
The City College, CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In his piece on Open Admissions at the City University of New York Martin Mayer finds that university standards will inevitably erode when we extend the citizen's right to public education from the twelfth grade to college. The real reason, he advises us, is more fundamental than the few pedagogical and administrative errors he reports at City University. It is even more basic than the gross underfunding and incredible congestion of facilities that he acknowledges at CUNY. The crucial flaw is the raw material of Open Admissions—the students. "They are," he concludes more in sadness than in rancor, "not very bright, most of them." Either their manifestly inferior genetic endowment or the intel-

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lectual damage inflicted upon them over twelve years in the New York City public-school system renders them academically irreparable as far as Mr. Mayer is concerned.

Apart from the omnipresent intellectual sneer that inevitably distorted his view of what City University is about in its Open Admissions endeavor, Mr. Mayer also makes a shambles of the facts he reports. Thus:

He asserts: "For entrance to the city's two-year junior colleges . . . requirements were generally much lower: a 70 average, which was earned by almost 90 per cent of all graduates from the high schools."

Fact: Two years before Open Admissions the liberal-arts transfer programs at CUNY's community colleges required a minimum high-school average of 80 for admission. In the technology majors the admission cut-off point was 73, some of the high-demand career programs requiring 81.

He asserts: "In 1964 the Economic Opportunity Act made the recruitment of blacks a prime goal of the poverty program, and New York funded its first College Discovery venture. The federal government dropped the other shoe in 1965 in promulgating the Higher Education Act, and a year later the state funded the . . . SEEK program."

Fact: No federal initiative or pressure was involved in either College Discovery or SEEK. In 1964, following publication by State Senator John J. Marchi of a report by Dr. Lester B. Granger which found a pattern of *de facto* discrimination against blacks and Puerto Ricans in CUNY's admission policies, pressure mounted to impose tuition upon the university's students on the grounds that they did not include the city's most sorely (i.e., minority) disadvantaged population. Earlier the same year, the legislative leaders in Albany (notably Assembly Speaker Joseph F. Carlino) insisted upon initiation of the College Discovery program at CUNY as a condition of keeping the university tuition-free. In 1965, without pressure from Albany or Washington, City College launched its Pre-Baccalaureate Program. At the following session of the legislature, the black and Puerto Rican caucus, supported by the Republican as well as Democratic leadership, won enactment of SEEK as a state-mandated program.

He asserts: In 1969 "the evidence turned up by these studies was discouraging: the centerpiece, an examination of the high-school senior class by Vice-Chancellor Birnbaum, produced a well-documented opinion that virtually every high-school graduate reasonably ready for an ordinary college program was already going to college."

Fact: The study alluded to by Mr. Mayer was written by Dr. Birnbaum and Joseph Goldman in May 1971, a year and a half after Open Admissions was launched. They concluded that the high rate of college attendance in New York City was a direct consequence of Open Admissions at CUNY.

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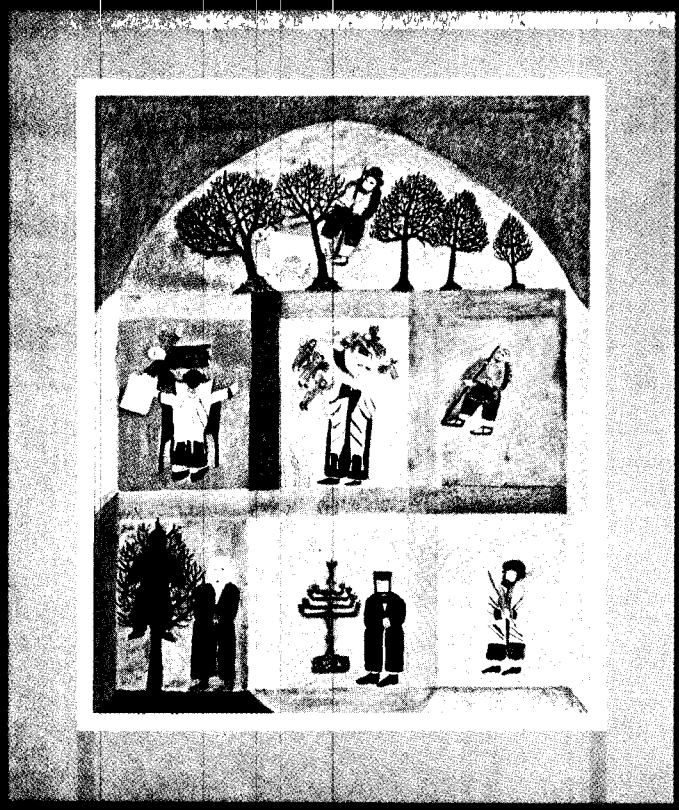

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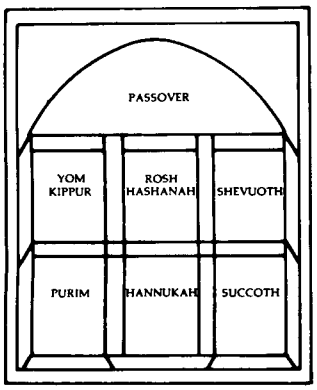

THE HOLIDAYS is typical of Harry Lieberman's joyous treatment of religious themes as he charmingly crowds a lifetime into a single picture, vibrant with color. Naive yet sophisticated, the overall effect can be likened to a Hasidic combination of biblical literalness and inspired symbolism. A faint nostalgia for the teachings of childhood and its lost innocence permeates the entire group despite its paradoxical appearance of stained glass panels in a wood frame.

Harry Lieberman's own life is as fascinating as his paintings, which win high critical praise wherever they are shown. Although he started his painting career late (at the age of 78) and as a primitive, there is nothing amateurish about his work. In fact, the richness of the color and detail in his interpretations of Biblical themes imbue them with great vitality and warmth.

Born in a typical *shtetl*, Gnieveshev, pop. 500, near Warsaw, nephew of the village Rabbi, Harry Lieberman followed the Hasidic Sect of Mystic Ecstasy founded by the Baal-Shem-Tov. He came to this country in 1906 and worked at first as a clothing cutter on the lower East Side of New York. The confectionary business beckoned next, and the one he and his wife started grew and prospered until he retired to Great Neck, New York, in 1950. There his primary interest was chess but, when his chess partner fell ill—Harry Lieberman turned to painting.

Now in his nineties, he is still exhibiting his work in both one-man and group exhibitions; and it is collected both here and abroad by museums, individuals, and institutions.

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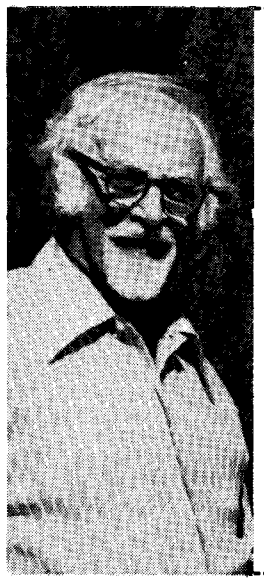

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Seymour Hyman as having decided to support a CUNY move to Open Admissions with the expression, "Hell, let everybody in . . ." after a radio report that "the Great Hall of City College had been set on fire."

Fact: Dr. Hyman, a City College alumnus and a member of the faculty there for many years, finds Mr. Mayer's version of his (Dr. Hyman's) reasoning in favor of Open Admissions "taken out of context at best. Not at all the development of my thinking on the subject which I described to him."

The accuracy of Mr. Mayer's quotation can be gauged by the fact that it was Aranow Auditorium, not the Great Hall of City College, that was set afire (by a private guard, as it later developed). It is highly unlikely that Seymour Hyman, the university official in overall charge of CUNY campus facilities, would have confused the names of major structures on his home campus.

He identifies Allen Ballard as "then head of the SEEK program."

Fact: Dr. Ballard was then university dean for academic development, having been succeeded as director of the City College SEEK program by Dean Robert Young the previous spring.

He identifies Frederick L. Burkhardt as "president of the Board of Higher Education" at the time of the City College disruption.

Fact: The name is Frederick *H.* Burkhardt. There is no president of the Board of Higher Education; its chief officer is its chairman. At the time of the City College disruption the chairman was Porter R. Chandler. He was succeeded by Dr. Burkhardt the following fall, well after the violence had subsided and the decision had been made to implement Open Admissions.

He asserts (in regard to CUNY's Open Admissions allocation procedures): "The rest of the class is filled with students who did not achieve the cut-off grade but did achieve a rank in the graduating class of their own high school matching the citywide percentage of students who *did* achieve the cut-off grade."

Fact: Admission to senior colleges, since the launching of Open Admissions at CUNY, is guaranteed to all students with an 80 or higher high-school average, or students in the top half of their high-school graduating class. Allocation preference is awarded by high-school average or rank in class, whichever is higher.

He asserts: "At City College . . . the administration has forbidden the imposition of prerequisites."

Fact: Prerequisites continue to be imposed upon students for admission to courses at City College. No prohibition has ever been ordered by the college administration. A glance through the college catalogue will document this statement with numerous examples.

He asserts: "Until the fall of 1972 . . . no Open Admissions students were flunked out anywhere in the City University system, and the 50 per cent or so who left during the first two years did so on their own."

Fact: Scores of students were flunked out of senior CUNY colleges during 1971. Mr. Mayer only cites two community colleges as exceptions. The Board of Higher Education's guidelines only provided for a year of grace before academic separation from CUNY. It was long the practice at CUNY colleges, as at many other universities, not to flunk out students the first year except for outrageously deficient work.

He asserts: "An effort was made to keep the scores on this test secret, but the figures leaked to the *Times*."

Fact: In return for the city's high schools administering these tests, City University agreed to a Board of Education proviso that the test scores not be released.

He describes President Candido de Leon as "a man in his late forties but much younger in appearance."

Fact: President de Leon is thirty-nine years of age; he was born in January 1934.

He quotes Vice Chancellor Newton as saying: "As a reward for distinguished service in setting up the Open Admissions program and starting York College in Queens, I have been sent to Vietnam."

Fact: Dr. Dumont Kenny was the first president of York College.

He asserts: "Typically, these [remedial] courses did not in the

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first year [of Open Admissions] carry college credit; but today they do, almost everywhere in the City University system."

Fact: No more than 8 college credits may be granted by a CUNY college for remedial courses. Significantly, CUNY colleges require 128 earned credits for a baccalaureate degree as opposed to 120 credits throughout most of U.S. higher education. Actually, far fewer than 8 is the maximum at most City University campuses. At City College, a student must pass through three remedial math courses—of four hours, four hours, and five hours, respectively—before receiving one credit. The course combines intermediate algebra with some college algebra. At Brooklyn College the remedial math courses carry no credit. At Queens there are three *no credit* math courses. At York a 3-credit English remedial course is actually three courses totaling twelve hours. York also offers one credit for an eight-hour reading course and John Jay offers one credit for an intensive three-hour reading course.

He asserts: "Nearly three months into the academic year, a group at Hunter was offered a lecture in how to use the library, essentially an introduction into the arcana of the Dewey decimal system."

Fact: The students were freshmen. Most institutions of higher education in the United States include course material in library usage as part of freshman orientation curricula. Some offer freshman credit courses exclusively in the uses of the library which include more than a single lecture devoted to the Dewey decimal system.

He asserts: "As for black-studies courses, many of these are doubtless 'revolutionary' in tone; neither time nor patience permitted an investigation, and anyway, access is usually by invitation only."

Fact: Access to most CUNY classes is by invitation only. If Mr. Mayer wanted to observe virtually any class in the university, college rules or common civility would have required his requesting the *permission of the instructor*. As for black-studies courses being "revolutionary" in tone, in academia one man's revelation is often another's revolution. The eye of

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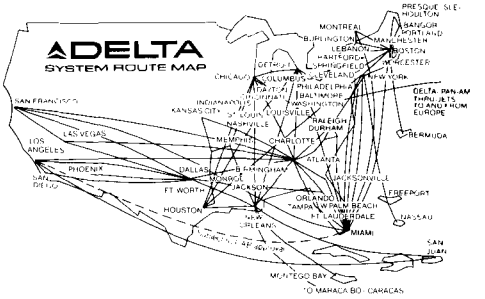

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the beholder shapes those judgments.

He asserts: "The students themselves, of course, have been learning from the grapevine about teachers who pass everybody."

Fact: The same phenomenon goes on at most undergraduate institutions and went on at CUNY long before Open Admissions.

He asserts: "One can dismiss them with the curse that they should cross the river on a bridge designed by an engineer from an engineering school where students were admitted by lottery; and that their injuries should then be treated by a doctor from a medical school where students were admitted by lottery. . . ."

Fact: If ever there was a straw-man argument, this is it. The capabilities of certified professionals —be they engineers, physicians, dentists, etc. are not determined by the admission procedures of the institutions that certified them. They are determined by the qualifications for graduation. CUNY has not relaxed its standards for graduation. Degree holders continue to fare well in the leading graduate institutions. This includes substantial numbers of SEEK alumni, the forerunners of Open Admissions students.

He asserts: "City University headquarters speaks of it [Hostos] as a college using programmed instruction and computer-assisted instruction as major elements, but in fact, students are using neither programs nor computers."

Fact: President de Leon of Hostos told Mr. Mayer a number of times during his visit there that the use of computers and programmed instruction was the *direction* toward which Hostos was moving; that the college wanted to find out what worked and didn't work before moving its modular-education design into costly mechanization. As Dr. de Leon has repeatedly told visitors to his campus, "There is no reason to mechanize poor practice."

Mr. Mayer accuses the City University administration of seeking "neat answers to difficult questions." Throughout his interviews here at CUNY's headquarters Mr. Mayer was advised that we do not have the kind of neat answers he was trying to put in the mouths of university administrators.

The lengthiest footnote purportedly describes a conversation that occurred at Brooklyn College between Mr. Mayer and staff members involved in a "Black English" research program. In it a staff member accuses Mr. Mayer of being "patronizing and hostile." I was not present when that interview transpired, but, as director of the Office of University Relations, I was present when he discussed Open Admissions with other top CUNY officials. "Patronizing" would be a fairly accurate description of his tone throughout those discussions. . . .

HENRY D. PALEY
Office of University Relations
The City University of
New York
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have been a reader of COMMENTARY for more than twenty years, during which time I have found the published articles to be of varying degrees of interest. At no time, however, did I suspect the integrity of the material published. The recent article by Martin Mayer has changed my perception of COMMENTARY. As a member of the Board of Higher Education who voted for Open Admissions to the City University, I have followed the development of this program with scrupulous attention, and I found Mr. Mayer's analysis replete with distortions, exaggerations, misrepresentations, and blatant misstatements of fact. . . .

NORMAN E. HENKIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I find myself in rather complete agreement with most of the conclusions reached by Martin Mayer. However, I should like to correct several misstatements of fact. Whereas the special sequence of three semesters (Chemistry 5, 6, and 7) for underprepared students yields 9 college credits, the regular two-semester chemistry sequence is, and always was, worth 8 credits rather than 6 credits as stated in the article.

It is not true that we have removed "prerequisites from *all* courses at City College." Courses without prerequisites were approved by the Faculty Council for

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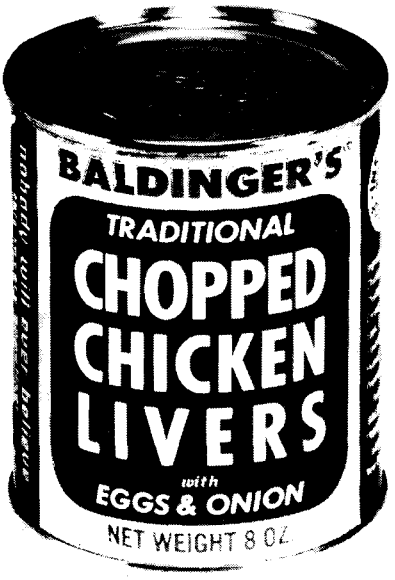

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some programs, e.g., some ethnic-studies programs, over the objections of a minority, to which I belonged.

Finally, I am in disagreement with the inferred conclusion that a yield of seventeen students in Chem 7 out of a starting group of 120 students in Chem 5 is a disaster. Indeed, I am encouraged by these results in light of the fact that seventeen is not simply a number but represents seventeen people who now have a chance for advanced study but who would never have had such a chance in the past. Furthermore, since the third semester is not required for students in the nursing program (either at City College or at any other nursing program in the country), the actual yield of students in Chem 7 is considerably greater than the numbers would suggest.

ABRAHAM MAZUR
Department of Chemistry
The City College, CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was one of many members of the City College faculty who eagerly volunteered to teach classes in the Open Admissions program, and I find David Newton's statement, quoted by Martin Mayer, that "the sense of commitment and dedication I had expected from my colleagues was nowhere to be found" simply incredible. I offer the following questions and comments on the article itself.

1) Since the program was launched in September 1970 and since, to quote Chancellor Kibbee, "the first year, and the second year, were a hell of a mess," is it quite fair to attempt an evaluation of the program in February 1973?

2) If, as Mr. Mayer writes, "what is most objectionable in the promotion of Open Admissions is merely a natural outgrowth of the abuse of educational credentials by employers and, indeed, by the public at large," does Mr. Mayer believe that a public institution like CUNY can (or should) resist pressures of this kind?

3) Assuming that, despite such noble experiments as Higher Horizons, Headstart, decentralization, and now the Open Classroom, the elementary and secondary schools have failed to prepare adequately the thousands clamoring for admission to college, can CUNY ignore the problem so long as no other means of continuing formal education is available to them?

4) In a society where Mr. Nixon proposes to increase military spending during the next peacetime year by five billion dollars, should we cavil over the "nearly half-a-billion dollars a year" spent on Open Admissions even if we measure the success of the program by the 30, 20, 10, or 5 per cent who may not only make it at CUNY but may go on to become productive professionals? Whatever the cost, can we afford not to "save" the remnant?

5) Assuming with Mr. Mayer that failure for Open Admissions can be defined as "a decline in the respect accorded to a diploma from a branch of the City University," does Mr. Mayer have any evidence of such a decline, especially in view of the fact that, to cite Mr. Mayer himself, "the numbers of able students entering the city colleges have not dropped seriously. . ."?

There is no question about the massive problems with which CUNY has been trying to cope as a result of Open Admissions. The sudden establishment of the program without any meaningful preparation for the flood of new students (in 1969 an entering class of 19,000, in 1970 a class of 35,000); the lack of personnel trained to deal with the desperate need for remedial instruction; the inadequacy of funding (remedial-class size was actually increased during the second year of the program!); the tacit expectation of an instant miracle to compensate for previous educational deprivation; the pathetic overcrowding in antiquated facilities—all these are factors, touched on by Mr. Mayer, which ought to be carefully weighed in considering the case of Open Admissions. But they do not in themselves constitute a case for or against the program unless they remain and are exacerbated. I continue to have faith, naive perhaps, that solutions to most of our problems can be found if we have the will to find them.

IRWIN STARK
Department of English
The City College, CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a teacher, I was shocked to read in Martin Mayer's article what two educators were quoted as saying with respect to their feel-

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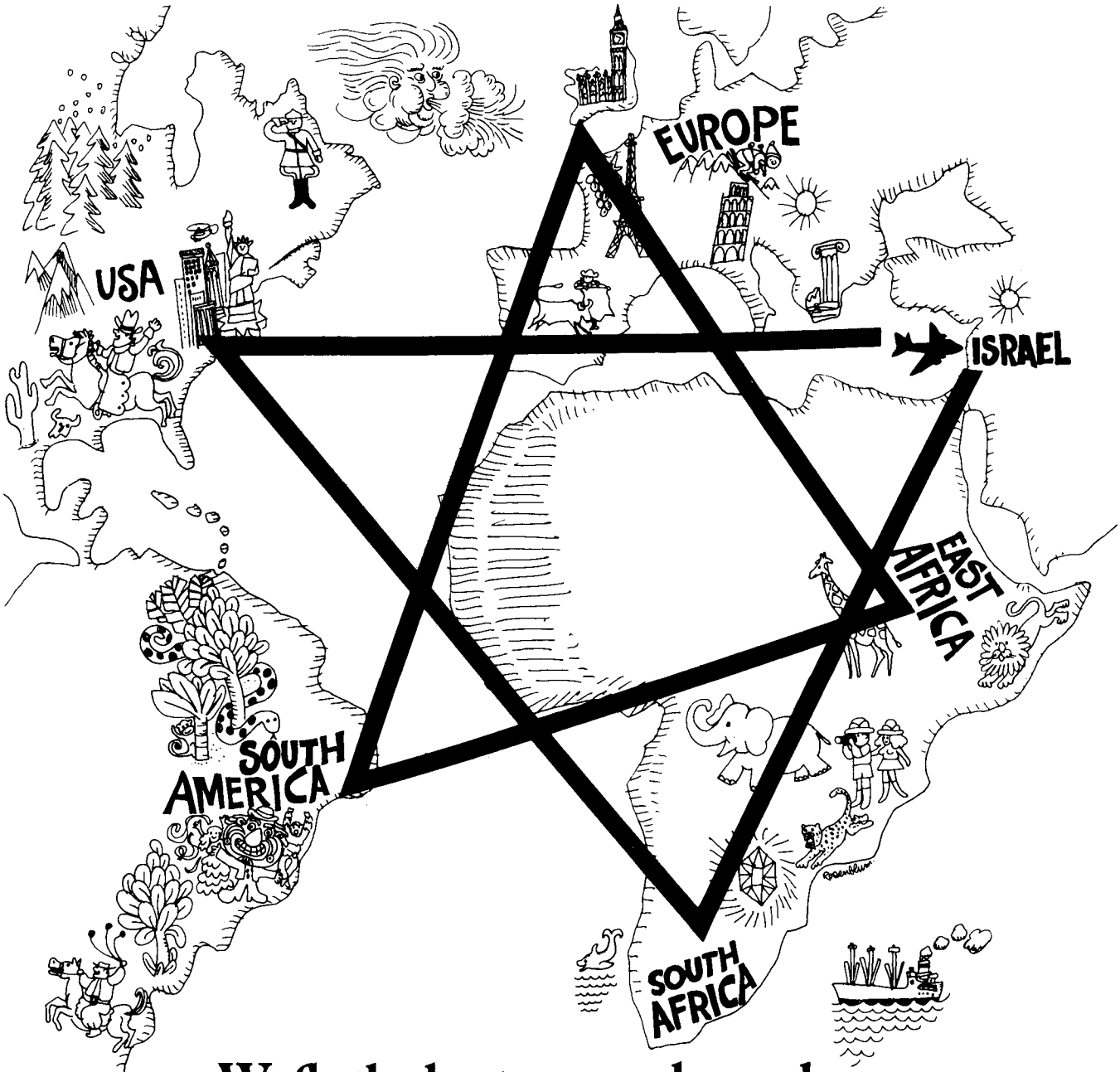

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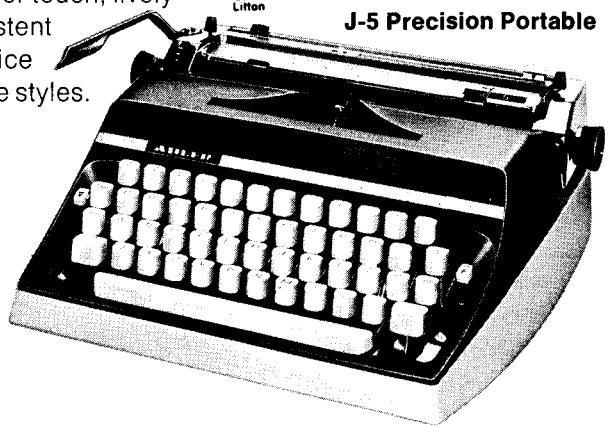

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All of the thought-stirring authors in column 1 appear in *Freedom At Issue*. Their recent titles, scrambled, are in column 2. Can you match them up?

Col. 1	Col. 2
(1) Arnold Beichman	☐ Revisionist Historians and Isolationism
(2) Milovan Djilas	☐ Arms Race, No; R & D Race, Yes?
(3) Oscar Handlin	☐ "Reconstitute" the Universities?
(4) Walter W. Heller	☐ Is Communism Evolving Into Democracy?
(5) Sidney Hook	☐ Of Civil Disobedience
(6) William R. Kintner	☐ High Cost of Discrimination
(7) Seymour M. Lipset	☐ The 5 Big Lies About the U.S.
(8) Robert Nisbet	☐ The Search for the Oppressed
(9) Eugene V. Rostow	☐ Japan and America in the 1970's
(10) Robert A. Scalapino	☐ Restoration of Academic Authority
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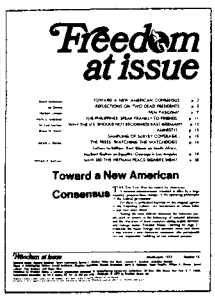

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ings about teaching students who are less than good or excellent—that is, the majority. Their opinion was, they said, that "performance of a given staff will depend on the presence of a certain number of really good students. . . . It's much more fun to confront the student at something like your intellectual level."

I disagree. It is more fun to be challenged by students who are at something unlike your own intellectual level.

Our job is to stimulate the students intellectually, not they us. What kind of surgeon would it be who pegged his performance as an M.D. to the alleged worthiness, or whatever, of his patients? While the "oath" taken by members of the teaching profession may not be Hippocratic, it definitely should not be hypocritical. Presumably, the self-sworn oath and dedication of teachers is to stimulate and lead students, all of them, to learn and to gain knowledge and understanding.

When some people speak of teaching as being "rewarding," surely they must mean that it is challenging, that it is the "poor" and "average" students who need and deserve as much or more of the teacher's endeavor than the *A* and *B* students, that when the teacher finishes a given class, he or she feels that the class went well not because the teacher was stimulated but because the students were.

There is, after all, a recognized difference between hedonism and enlightened self-interest, as all good Utilitarians know. The teacher who starts with his own intellectual stimulation and pleasure and who seeks intellectual exchange with people who are "almost" his peers is perhaps in the wrong profession. The expression "the pleasures of learning" was, I believe, never intended to be one-sided or an affair between some *A* and *B* students and their teacher. If the teaching profession ever lost its sense of dedication—to *all* students—a University Without Walls would become a University Without Sense.

ALBERT L. WEEKS
Department of Continuing Education
New York University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is obvious from Martin Mayer's article, which is written

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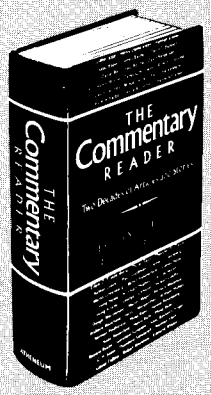

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The Pattern of the Chinese Past

MARK ELVIN

Testing almost every generalization ever made about Chinese social history, this bold and original work examines the evolution of Chinese society from the second century to the nineteenth in terms of changing patterns in the economics of technology. The author deals in turn with three major questions. First, by what virtue did the Chinese empire remain united when the Roman Empire and all other historic empires ultimately collapsed? Second, what caused the technical revolution that made twelfth-century China the most advanced nation in the world? Finally, why did Sung China's flair for technology disappear and fail to produce the equivalent of the Industrial Revolution in the West? The answers to the first two questions are found in the ability of the Chinese to keep one step ahead of their neighbors in the most important technical skills—military, economic, and organizational—and, since strength in one could partially offset weakness in another, in the complex of such skills as a whole. The reasons for China's technological stagnation after 1350 are more complex; they include a paradoxical "high-level equilibrium trap," an economic situation in which farming and water transport were so perfected in traditional terms as to place a block on the expansion of per-capita demand and so discourage investment in technological improvements. Dr. Elvin shows that many of the causal links usually taken for granted simply will not hold when confronted with the Chinese case. His book is thus important for those interested in history and economics in the widest context. Effects of the pattern he traces can still be seen today. $12.50

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with his customary good sense, mingled with logic, research, and intellectual honesty, that what the Open Admissions-ites are really doing, with minor exceptions, is calling an elementary or junior high school by another name, viz., college. This is just one more significant example of what is happening in our increasingly fraudulent society.

It is bad enough that the high schools have been pressured into graduating hordes of illiterate youngsters. And mind you, this is true not only of non-academic pupils but academic pupils as well; note, for example, the widespread doctoring of Regents marks as a means of raising passing percentages. (Having been president of the AFT, UFT, and the Association of Teachers of Social Studies in New York City, I am familiar with this situation.) How demoralizing, then, to all sense of academic integrity is this added pretense of admitting them all, lock, stock, and barrel, and thus watering down the college diploma as well. Not to mention the irreparable harm done to the pupils themselves, by way of raising—and then shattering—false hopes, and making them part and parcel of the dishonest charade.

Of course, it is possible to carry the Open Admissions "education" to its logical conclusion—and judging from Mr. Mayer's account, we are pretty nearly there already. Why not do as the lower schools have been doing for some time—push the students through on the basis of classroom attendance?

Marvin Schick, a former Hunter political-science professor who is liaison between the Mayor's office and CUNY, is quoted as asserting that "many state universities, including some famous ones, were giving diplomas for very low qualities of work for years, and the country was none the worse for it." I have news for Mr. Schick. The country is in pretty bad shape—indeed, very bad. If there were a need and the space for it, I could document for Mr. Schick a tale of woe—ignorance, inefficiency, philistinism, and what have you—throughout our society, that even he would have difficulty sweeping under the rug. Awarding the stamp of approval heretofore inherent, at least in some degree, in a college diploma to all comers is a sure way of making universally shoddy an already quite shoddy world.

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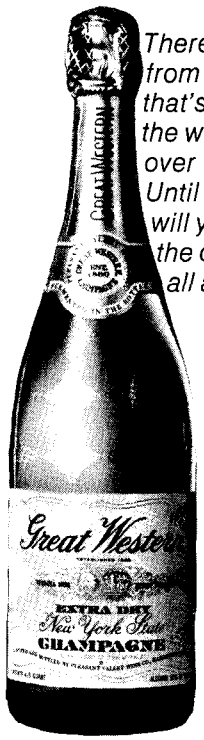

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I make a prediction: the next step will be Open Faculties. Anyone with a college degree or a community-college diploma will have the automatic right to a college teaching job—first come, first hired. Indeed, with the quota system we are almost there *de facto*.

Finally, Mr. Mayer makes a fine . . . point when he writes about the harmful effects of Open Admissions crowding on the campus amenities, and hence the "uncivilizing atmosphere." To point the matter up, I call attention to the expansion plans of Cornell University which deliberately and significantly take account not only of future building needs but the preservation of vistas and other aesthetic features. . . .

By way of postscript, I comment on Norman Podhoretz's "The Intellectuals & the Pursuit of Happiness" [February] in which he says that the "traditional American ideal. . . , equality of opportunity, . . . [is supported] through measures like Open Admissions." I see no such connection, in principle or in practice. Equality of opportunity requires that every qualified person, regardless of socioeconomic status, should have equal access to education, as well as to a job, etc. It patently does not mean that everyone, regardless of qualifications, should have the same rights. In that direction lies social and intellectual anarchy. . . .

CHARLES COGEN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Some eight years ago, the late David Boroff wrote an incisive article about New York's City College, which he characterized as "A Kind of Proletarian Harvard" (New York *Times Magazine*, March 28, 1965):

> It has produced more embryonic Ph.D.'s than any other institution in the country. . . . Alumni provide a stunning roll call of the country's talent. . . . The intellectuals who came out of City College . . . are among the nation's leading academic community. By any estimate, the school has been an extraordinary forcing-ground of creativity.
>
> There is guilt about the small proportion of Negro and Puerto Rican students, but there is also staunch resistance to lowering admission requirements. Instead, special coaching—the College Discovery Program—is provided for minority-group children who lack the grades but seem to have the aptitude for the arduous City College grind.

There were few if any dissenting opinions expressed at the time about Boroff's laudatory presentation and evaluation. Today, of course, all this has changed. Both "the staunch resistance to lowering admission requirements" and "the arduous City College grind" have disappeared.

The overall scholastic evaluation of Open Admissions by Martin Mayer is not likely to be validly challenged. Open Admissions has proved a major calamity and disaster for higher education in New York City.

As a graduate of Townsend Harris Hall—the preparatory school for City College—and the College itself, I am especially embittered at the destruction of an institution which made it possible for me and other poor but qualified boys to receive an excellent education and attain professional status.

I would take issue only with one aspect of Martin Mayer's analysis. I believe that he is mistaken, or at least that the evidence is inconclusive, regarding the role of business in creating the alleged inordinate demand for college graduates, thus indirectly promoting Open Admissions.

While business organizations cannot be faulted for trying to secure college-trained professional and managerial personnel, it does not seem factually correct to state that fewer and fewer positions are open to non-college graduates. . . . Also, I do not think it is accurate to state that the overwhelming number of freshmen, black and white, go to college simply "to get better jobs," as they themselves say. This is their simple answer, which leaves much unexplained. Their real motives seem mixed and many. There is glamor, glory, and prestige in attending college, especially for those who believe they have been traditionally barred from so attending. The idea of idling for four years, holding "rap sessions," "being involved," and getting "educated" is a luxury few can resist. And when freshmen speak of getting jobs, many are probably thinking of jobs outside the business world: law, medicine, engineering, architecture, and teaching, professions in which a college education is no longer a debatable prerequisite.

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Unlike the business community, those basically responsible for this major educational disaster are: Mayor John V. Lindsay, whose politically motivated desire to ingratiate himself with minority groups led him to support Open Admissions; most top college administrators—towers of jelly, all, spineless and gutless—who bowed to the disastrous politics of Lindsay because they were more concerned about their jobs than with the preservation of collegiate education; New Left teachers, eagerly seeking new disciples for their anti-Establishment beliefs and doctrines; the Alumni Association of City College, which yielded to the pressure of Lindsay and the college administration, despite the opposition of many of its members.

The tragedy, of course, goes far beyond the ultimate worthlessness of an Open Admissions diploma. Although some bright, capable, talented, disciplined young people will achieve, despite Open Admissions, the likelihood is that most will be deprived of a genuine college heritage. They will receive an uninspired, mediocre education, at best.

Demoralized teachers tend to become apathetic and indifferent. What enthusiasm and vitality can an English professor bring to a literature class if many of the students cannot read or spell? How does a math professor, accustomed to teach analytic geometry and calculus, deal in an elementary course with students who do not even know their arithmetic fundamentals?

Perhaps most tragic of all, it is extremely cruel to encourage young people to go to college who are not equipped by intelligence, aptitude, and temperament to endure the rigors and discipline of a meaningful college education. Either they are likely to destroy the college as an educational institution, or they will become frustrated, bitter, and angry drop-outs. . . .

WILLIAM ISAACS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to congratulate Martin Mayer on his excellent article. The impact of Open Admissions policies, however, reaches beyond the City University and other public universities to private educational institutions as well.

Under the impact of increasing costs and declining federal aid, any number of private colleges and universities have enacted Open Admissions policies in all but name. Furthermore, to enhance the "efficiency" of their personnel and facilities, administrations at these institutions have adopted the standard of class size to measure "productivity." In consequence, course prerequisites have been dropped at many places, and academic standards lightened.

Better universities and colleges can perhaps withstand these changes; they still make their selections from a pool of relatively qualified and superior students. This is not the case at institutions of middling and lesser quality where larger numbers of poorer students are likely to overwhelm both professors and the few good students who remain. Thus here too, we are likely to see the same

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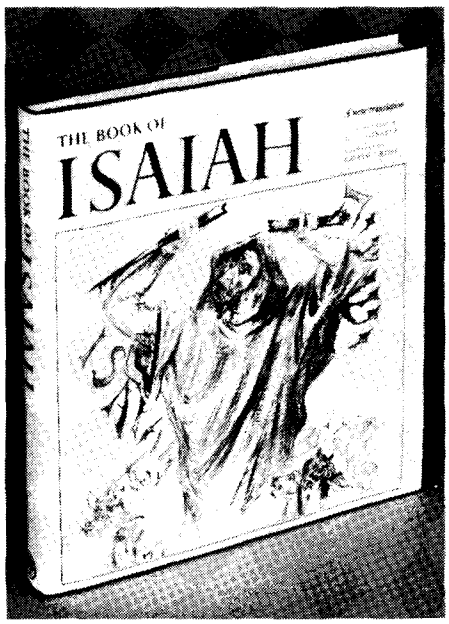

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demoralization and meaninglessness of education that Mr. Mayer describes so vividly.

As Mr. Mayer concludes, "What is beating at all the universities . . . is involuntary education on the tertiary level, the forced prolongation of an outworn adolescence for purposes that are quite separate from the civilizing Idea of a university."

(Dr.) IRENE A. GILBERT
Cambridge, Massachusetts

MARTIN MAYER writes:

Most of these letters do not seem to me to require reply, but some of them do, to wit:

Hans B. C. Spiegel, Seymour Z. Mann, and Oliver J. Gray: I visited the class for about seventy minutes, and spent the last twenty or thirty speaking with students. From that experience, and from conversation with other Hunter professors, I think fourth-grade show-and-tell a reasonable description of the enterprise. If the graduate students in urban planning are subject to similar fakery, I feel sorry for them.

Alan Fiellin and Fritz Steinhardt: I am sorry not to have investigated the question of credit for remedial mathematics. As it happens, I didn't run into mathematics on the programs of any of the Open Admissions students whose work was discussed with me, and I assumed (as I should not have assumed) that the mathematics situation was parallel to that in English. I did not of course mean to imply that all prerequisites had been dropped in mathematics and science: you just can't do that. But despite Dean Fiellin's disclaimer, I continue to believe in the testimony of a number of City College professors that the registrar does not impose, and the professors are forcefully discouraged from suggesting, prerequisites for courses in the humanities and social sciences.

Henry D. Paley: I regret getting Frederick Burkhardt's middle initial wrong, and the garbling of the hall that was on fire, and the error on Candido de Leon's age (it shows my own age: the curriculum vitae said de Leon had been an artillery officer in the army in Germany, and to me that meant World War II. I was surprised, said he looked much younger; and of course should have checked further). I am not of course responsible for David Newton's view of his role at York College, nor could I care a whit about CUNY's reasons for trying to keep test scores secret. I do feel abused a little when I am accused of inaccuracy for pointing out that Mr. Paley's statement that Hostos used programmed instruction and computers, which he had made to me at headquarters, was not borne out by a visit to the college. And it should probably be mentioned that the study by Dr. Birnbaum to which I alluded was not the one published in 1971 but a previous, unpublished study which Dr. Birnbaum discussed with me when we rode in a taxi back to 80th Street from a meeting of a Higher Education Seminar at Columbia in 1967.

For the rest, saving the question of exactly when in the chronology people changed job titles (where I may indeed have been a few months off), I will stand by what is in the piece. It is of course conceivable that of 15,000 Open Admissons students, "scores" were flunked out in their second year; I was told not, at CUNY headquarters, in Mr. Paley's presence. The description of the admissions process, college by college, is correct as given, and Mr. Paley's version is misleading, because City College in fact gave regular admission this year to students with grade averages as low as 77.5 (which meant Open Admissions to students ranking anywhere in the upper 60 per cent of their class). Dr. Joe L. Rempson's article in *City Almanac*, recommended to me at CUNY, says that prior to Open Admissions "those with an average between 70 and 82 were guaranteed admission to a community college"; perhaps Mr. Paley's "technology majors" is a weasel. The paragraph about the sequence of federal and state actions was also, in essence, a digest of material from the Rempson study, and clearly did not imply that CUNY had been pushed by the federal government.

On the more general question, Dr. Rempson, who profoundly supports Open Admissions, writes that "It is leaning more toward failing than succeeding regardless of what standards are used." I don't think I said more than that, myself. And I did not say failure was inevitable: I said CUNY was not handling its problems well. And I described what seemed to me the likely consequences.

The situation is as follows:

1) Large numbers of students who would not historically have been considered ready for college work are being admitted.

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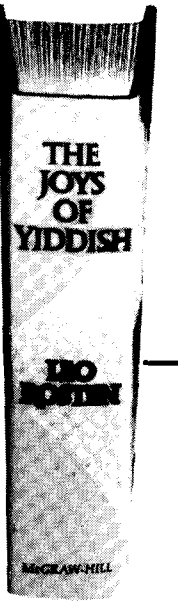

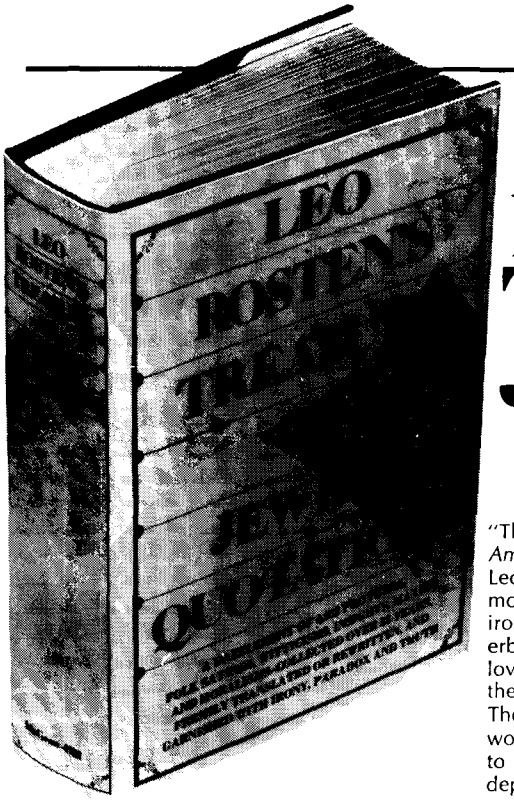

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A bachelor: A man who comes to work each morning from a different direction.

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2) The success of the program is being judged, at City University headquarters and elsewhere, by the proportion who acquire diplomas.

3) The standards for the diploma are to be maintained.

These three conditions are not, to my mind, inevitably contradictory; and I am not much happier with the letters from my friends than I am with the letters from my enemies. I do not think it is beyond the wit of man to devise programs that would in fact take increasing proportions of the population through the equivalent of a standard college program. I did find a few encouraging programs at CUNY (and I missed what may be the best, Mina Shaughnessy's at City College), but it seemed to me entirely obvious that there wasn't anywhere near enough program to keep the three conditions from becoming contradictory.

The first of them—Open Admissions—is now locked into the system. The second—the pressure for awarding degrees to increasing numbers of those invited to attend—seems to me a political necessity in the organization of this monster university. Which means that the third—the quality of the diploma—is going to suffer. What is especially sad is that the damage will be most severe to that fraction of the Open Admissions students who do in fact reach conventional levels of achievement for a college diploma: nobody will believe it.

The thrust of the article, of course, was that all this agitation for degrees is societal nonsense, caused by the plague of credentialism. In an article in the *New Republic* a year or so ago, I proposed that corporations with training programs be compelled by law to accept applicants without college degrees for a certain fraction of the places, and that efforts be made to restore apprenticeship as a route to the professions. An increasing fraction of the jobs for which academic credentials are required does not in fact demand the skills such credentials are supposed to certify. Pressure on the job market not to require meaningless credentials seems to me a much more sensible procedure than pressure on the colleges to expand the numbers of credentials given—better for the students, better for the colleges, better for the society. Nobody seems to be arguing with that point at all; but nobody seems to be doing anything about it, either.

Anti-Semitism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While Robert Alter's essay "Defaming the Jews" [January] made some cogent observations on the semi-respectability of "jokebook anti-Semitism," the use of distortion and caricature vis-à-vis Jews is far from limited to greeting cards or the satires of a Philip Roth. . . . Is it not even more reprehensible to find a resort to anti-Semitic imagery in nonfictional material? An illustration of this comes from the pages of *Newsweek* (11/27/72) where, in a review of *Germans: The Biography of an Obsession,* an associate editor of the magazine approvingly cites the author's view that "The Israelis are the Prussians of today . . . heroes and soldiers and the Germans have become businessmen and moneygrubbers!" The reviewer then concludes that the book is *"fairly unclouded by ideology"* (my emphasis).

ARNOLD MARKOWITZ
Buffalo, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

An example which might be added to Robert Alter's fine article on "Defaming the Jews" is the portrayal of Jews on television. There is nothing shameful or wrong about being a butcher or delicatessen-shop owner with a slight Yiddish accent and a somewhat unusual sense of humor. What is unfortunate is that this is the standard mode of presenting non-assimilated Jews in the "show-something-funny, make-a-buck" world of television.

A viewer . . . not too familiar with Jews might receive from these caricatures both an untruthful and an unsympathetic image. . . .

STEPHEN SACKS
Silver Spring, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Rabbi Herzog of Ireland suggested an easy way to identify those engaged in "Defaming the Jews." The Prophets spoke to the people about the specific shortcomings of certain groups; they hoped for improvement and redemption. The anti-Semites, on the other hand, talk about the Jews and include all Jews in the same indictment; their hope and

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Women and Work

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Here are some of my reactions to Ellen Moers's "Money, the Job, and Little Women" [January]. Concerned as we all are to establish a meaningful tradition of middle-class women's attitudes toward work outside the home, we must, of course, consider Louisa May Alcott as an important 19th-century example of the independent spirit. Yet I think we have to be especially wary in looking at Alcott's work as an illustration of the same qualities her life exemplified. The very fact that she so needed the money her father failed to provide often caused her, I believe, to write what middle-class women wanted to hear most —that women's place was in the home, not in the job market.

That the character Christie is wealthy at the end of *Work* is not the result of any work she has done, but because she has received a husband's pension and an uncle's legacy. The work of God that the mixed group seated together finally see leading to women's liberty is really the traditional self-sacrificial or charitable work women have always done as an assertion of moral superiority over men. Significantly, early in the novel when Christie seems to be finding genuine self-fulfillment as an actress, her selfishness appalls her, and she gives up the stage, arguing to herself that she wasn't really good enough. What man would look at his profession similarly?

A contemporary critic of *Work* accused Louisa May Alcott of actually betraying the working girl by using marriage as a way out of difficulties instead of advocating better working conditions for those women who wished to remain independent. Perhaps her May ancestors made it truly impossible for her to identify with the women whose work she shared. . . .

Many middle-class women today might express similar disappointment that Louisa May Alcott followed the requests of her readers rather than her own better judgment in permitting Jo March to marry. Our chance for a feminine Huck Finn disappeared into the kitchen. But if both *Huckleberry Finn* and *Little Women* share the artificiality of their conclusions, both books remain equally valuable in suggesting what freedom can be, an especially difficult question for a woman.

EUGENIA KALEDIN
Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

ELLEN MOERS writes:

I am delighted that Eugenia Kaledin's letter points up many of the conflicting tendencies in Alcott's work for which I had no space in the few paragraphs I gave the subject in my article. But both Miss Kaledin and I are inevitably guilty of simplifications: my worst, in omitting to mention that Alcott's alternate title for *Work* was *Success*; and hers, for leaving the impression that Alcott could handle the theme of "freedom" (for women or men) without its Victorian concomitant, "duty." That making money appeared the first of duties to a female Alcott was responsible, I believe, for the best *and* the worst of her writing.

Decimal Points and Taxes

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hyman Bookbinder's letter [Letters from Readers, March] points out that I made a decimal-point error in a calculation illustrating one of the points in a letter responding to Irving Kristol's article on equality ["About Equality," November 1972]. Collecting an extra thousand dollars in taxes from everyone making over $30,000 a year would raise only $3.5 billion, not $35 billion, as I had written. In a sense, I am hesitant to reply to Mr. Bookbinder's letter, skeptical as I am of those who, an error in an argument they are making having been pointed out, blithely continue on as if nothing had happened. (I am reminded of a *Harvard Lampoon* parody of the *Harvard Crimson*, during the days when the politicization of that paper made inaccuracy a virtual way of life. The parody ran several letters of protest from people whose statements had been terribly misquoted. The editors replied, "The *Crimson* regrets the error, but stands by its original story.")

Well, I don't completely stand by my original story, but nevertheless, I believe the truth lies about halfway between my original argument and Mr. Bookbinder's contention that "there just isn't enough money to be picked up in the highest-income rungs alone, both to raise the incomes of the lower rungs and to meet all the public needs that Mr. Kelman and others properly advocate." The fact is that families making over $30,000 a year control about 20 per cent of the U.S. gross naional income, which, at present GNI levels, is close to $240 billion. That certainly is a lot of money. Currently, these families pay a total of about $80 billion in various taxes, or about one-third the total income of this group. To raise an additional $35 billion, the tax load of this group would have to rise to $115 billion, or from one-third to almost one-half. Such a level of taxation would be far from total confiscation, and those affected would still live quite comfortably. But such a tax increase would indeed be both more painful and politically much more difficult to achieve than the $1,000-a-family figure I had originally suggested. Furthermore, raising tax rates to that extent would probably also require some increase in the tax rates on marginal income between $20,000 and $30,000, so that the marginal rates above $30,000 would not become confiscatory.

In other words, it is *not* true that there are no substantial sums of money to be gained for the less well-off by income redistribution away from the wealthy. But at the same time, I was too sanguine in my original letter about how painless the process would be for the rich.

STEVEN KELMAN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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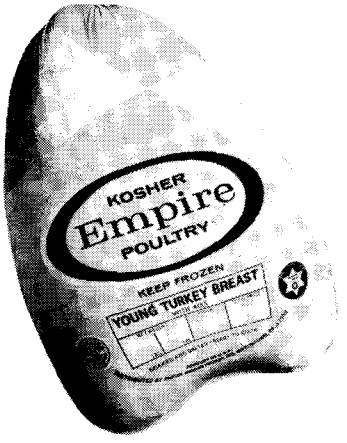

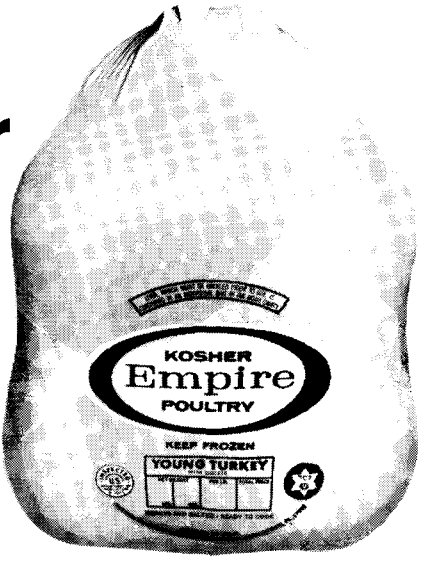

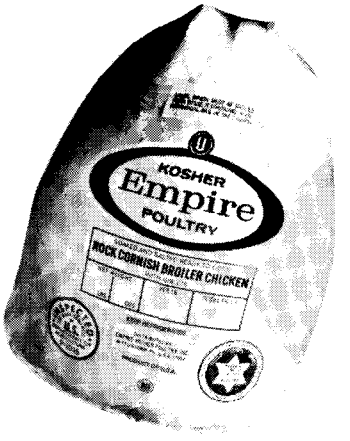

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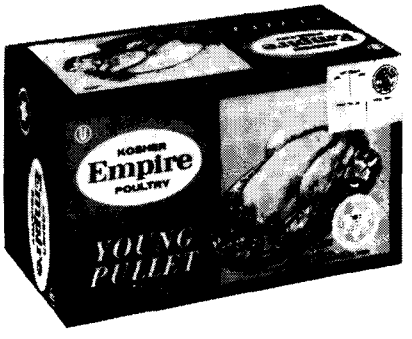

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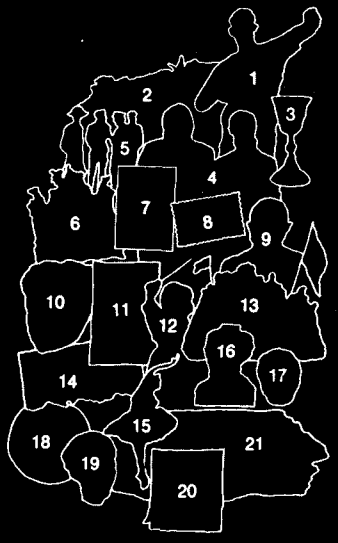

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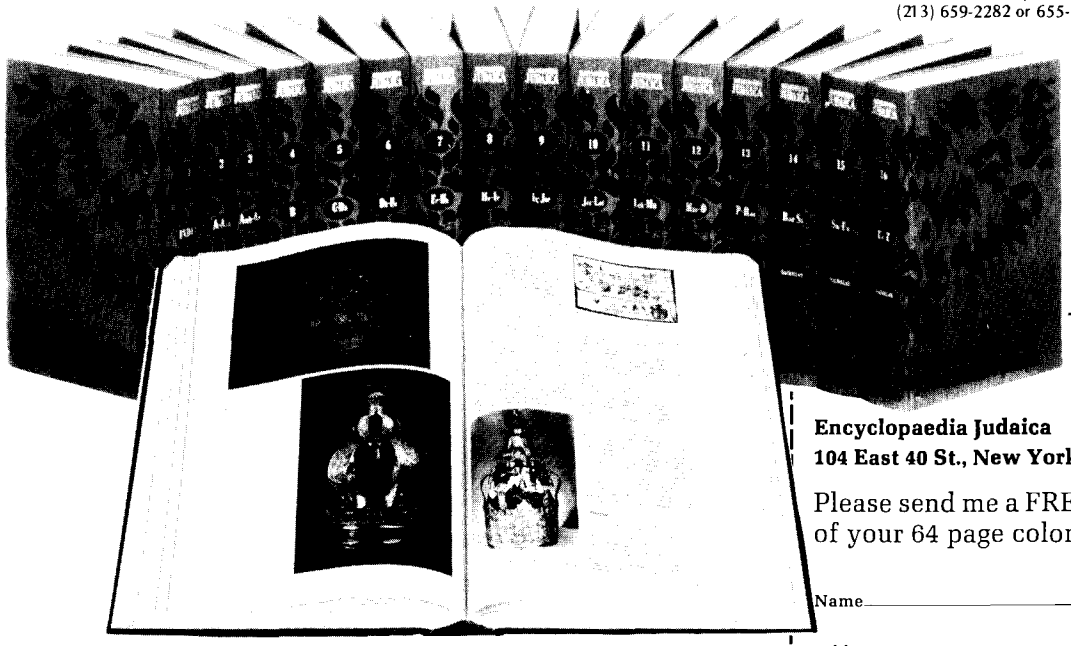

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Nixon, the Great Society, and the Future of Social Policy

A Symposium

In recent months a heated debate has been taking place on the past, present, and future of social policy in the United States. In an effort to explore the major issues involved in this debate, we invited a number of writers representing diverse political and social views to discuss the following questions:

1) *It is frequently said that the Great Society was a failure. Do you agree with this assessment? If not, to what particular features of the Johnson program would you attribute its success? If so, where would you place the blame? Was it insufficient financing? Was it the "services" approach?*

2) *It is also frequently said that Richard Nixon is leading a "counterrevolution" against the general trend of social policy of the last thirty or forty years. Do you agree with this characterization of the Nixon program? If so, toward what objectives would you say the "counterrevolution" is aimed? If not, how would you characterize the general thrust of the Nixon administration's policies, especially as reflected in the new budget?*

3) *What, in your judgment, would constitute a sound program in the area of social policy? In the light of the experience of the past ten years, what do you think the possibilities are in the foreseeable future? What are the limits?*

Edward C. Banfield: 1) The Great Society was a Great Cornucopia overflowing with all sorts of goodies: civil-rights laws, the Office of Economic Opportunity (a cornucopia within a cornucopia), Model Cities (another cornucopia), manpower-training programs, compensatory-education programs, and so on—hundreds of items altogether. Their diversity resists any one-word verdict.

Many millions of dollars were spent monitoring and evaluating, but the products of these efforts are of little value for the present purpose. The evaluations are mostly of bits and pieces of certain programs—Community Action in some cities and from certain standpoints, for example. So far as I am aware, not a single program has been evaluated systematically and in detail. That would be impossible in most cases because of the vague and contradictory nature of the goals. Model Cities, for example, was intended to concentrate resources in order to make a "substantial impact" on poor neighborhoods, to improve decision-making procedures in the offices of mayors and city managers, and (among other things) to foster coordination, innovation, and institutional change. No one had, or has, any way of knowing exactly what was meant by such words and, apart from that, there was, and is, no way of judging how much of one goal (say, innovation) ought to have been sacrificed in order to secure more in terms of another (say, coordination).

It must be remembered, too, that much of what is associated in the public mind with the Great Society had long been in existence. When Secre-

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tary George Romney called the Federal Housing Administration programs "a $100-billion-dollar mistake" he was not referring to those of the Great Society: the national housing goal was set by Congress in 1949 and even at that time the principal housing programs were a decade old.

DESPITE these considerations, I believe it is possible to separate out the Great Society programs and pass judgment upon them collectively. The Great Society had two general goals. The more widely publicized was that of bringing incomes up to what came to be called the poverty line. The other, which was more important from the standpoint of most of the professionals who participated in the design of the programs, was to bring "culturally deprived" persons into the "mainstream." The chronically poor, especially the young among them, were to be given training in schools and work places so that they could get steady, high-paying jobs; their civil rights were to be protected and extended; and they were to be provided with better health, housing, and recreational facilities—all with "maximum feasible participation" on their part. This, it was thought, would reduce frustration and "alienation" and engender self-confidence, self-respect, and a healthy desire for political and economic independence.

Judged against these goals, almost all of the Great Society programs (the exceptions that I have in mind are the civil-rights laws) range from unsuccessful to counter productive.

The number of the poor did, it is true, decline by one-fourth between 1965 and 1970. Without any doubt the Great Society programs accounted for some of this (OEO alone spent nearly $10 billion) but the Social Security program established by the New Deal accounted for more (mostly old people whose incomes had not been much below the line to begin with) and there were others—no one seems to know how many—whose increase of income was due to the natural growth of the economy. Indeed, on the whole poverty seems to have decreased at a *slower* rate in the 1960's than before. Robert J. Lampman, in his valuable *Ends and Means of Reducing Income Poverty* (Markham, 1971), reports that the percentage of the total population in low-income status fell from 26 in 1947 to 19 in 1957 and to 12 in 1967. The principal factors affecting the rate of movement out of poverty are not the good intentions of legislators or the generosity of taxpayers: rather they are changes in the composition of the population, in occupations (especially farm versus non-farm), and in the size of the gross national product. According to Lampman and other economists, it is reasonable to expect that by 1980 no one will be below the existing poverty line. This would be the case no doubt even if the War on Poverty had never been declared.

There has also been progress toward the other goal of the Great Society programs—that of bringing the "culturally deprived" into the "mainstream." But here again most of it is not attributable to the programs. The income return to blacks who finished school in recent years is now about equal to that of whites; this has encouraged young blacks to want—and to get—somewhat more schooling than do whites of the same ability as measured by test performance. The Great Society's civil-rights laws deserve some of the credit for these developments, but surely the fundamental fact of the situation (accounting, among other things, for the passage of the laws) is that there has been a dramatic decline in white bigotry and insensitivity since the Second World War, resulting in vastly improved employment opportunities for the "culturally deprived" and making it possible for the motivated among them to find their way into the "mainstream." There is no evidence, so far as I have been able to discover, that the Community Action and other Great Society programs designed to stimulate upward mobility have succeeded in doing so. Where motivation developed it may have done so in spite of these programs rather than because of them. There is no doubt but that the injection of many billions of dollars of public funds benefited the black communities. The people who gained most, however, were middle class, not "culturally deprived."

That compensatory education programs have not worked and probably cannot be made to work is a conclusion now widely accepted even among those who expected most from them. Robert Levine, OEO's director of research in the Johnson administration, has written (in *The Poor Ye Need Not Have with You,* MIT Press, 1970) that in general ". . . the evaluation of educational programs shows that very little is known about what [will work] and even throws doubt on the importance of anything that might work. . . ." Much of the same has been said by others with respect to delinquency control, manpower training, community action, coordination, and most of the other programs. Indeed, in a paper presented in March at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Political Science Association, Professor Robert J. Leonard of the University of Evansville showed that anti-poverty expenditures (OEO, VISTA, Community Action, and Head Start) in 1968 had *no effect* on poverty, education, employment, and crime in the cities to which they went so far as could be judged by such crude but plausible measures as proportion of employed males per capita before and after.

WHATEVER judgment one makes as to the benefits of these programs, one must face the fact of their costs. These have been, and are still, very large. It has been estimated (by Charles Schultze and his collaborators of the Brookings Institution in *Setting National Priorities: The 1973 Budget)* that federal expenditures on the major Great

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Society programs increased from $1.7 billion in fiscal 1963 to $35.7 billion in fiscal 1973.

These money costs are far exceeded, in my judgment, by many other, more or less intangible, costs, especially the following: the multiplication of categorical-grant programs beyond the capacity of the executive branch to administer them, with the result being delay, confusion, waste and corruption, and the "elbowing aside" (as the President recently put it) of state and local governments and of the private sector and their further decline in vigor and capacity; the raising of expectations to unreasonable levels, leading to widespread disappointment and frustration and, on the part of quite a few, to the conclusion that this is a "sick" society "not worth saving"; the use of public funds in some cities to underwrite the "leadership" of known criminals, revolutionaries, and mountebanks who exploited—and in some instances terrorized and ultimately destroyed—neighborhoods and institutions over which they were enabled to gain control (for a case in point, see the account of the destruction of the Woodlawn area of Chicago in the Winter 1973 issue of the *Public Interest*); and, finally, the cooptation of most of the young potential leaders of the poor neighborhoods and their subsequent neutralization and, in many instances, demoralization.

IT WAS not for lack of money that the Great Society programs failed. Some of the principal efforts—Model Cities, for example—had more of it than they could spend. Others spent prodigally without measurable achievement. Federal aid to public schools, for example, increased from $19 to $52 billion in the 1960's, but the test scores of pupils, which had previously been rising, declined. (However, it should be remembered that in this decade the schools were holding more low-achieving pupils for longer periods; presumably they had some success with a considerable number of them.)

If an "income" (as opposed to "services") strategy means giving money to people rather than to governments, it is doubtful whether—except perhaps in the very long run—it would have succeeded any better in changing the style of life of those whose handicap was not simply, or even primarily, lack of income—that is, the "culturally deprived." In my opinion, putting millions more on welfare (which is what the "income strategy" seems to mean in practice) would permanently seal a great many people off from the world of work. I agree with the authors of *Work in America* (MIT Press, 1973) that "the key to reducing familial dependency on the government lies in the opportunity [I would add also the disposition to accept the opportunity] for the central provider to work full-time at a living wage."

It is a virtue of the "services strategy" that the conspicuous failure of a "service" makes it politically vulnerable. Not so with the "income strategy"; whatever ill effects *that* produced would probably pass unnoticed or, in any event, not be charged against it. Politically it would be unassailable. Thus we have recently been told by Joel Handler that the theory that "if enough people get on welfare it will be politically untenable to treat them as 'undeserving' . . ." is "both brilliant and humane" (*Reforming the Poor*, Basic Books, 1972).

2) PRESIDENT NIXON no doubt wishes that Americans would do more for themselves and expect less to be done for them by government. Nevertheless I do not think that he is in the least likely to lead a "counterrevolution" against the trend of social policy. He knows, better perhaps than any man alive, that it is an indispensable condition of the working of the American political system that it offer strong incentives to all sorts of interests to press for advantages (not always "selfish" ones of course) and that incentives exist only as there is expectation of at least partial and occasional successes. He knows, therefore, that unwise and even outrageous measures must frequently be adopted, and that if it were otherwise (if, say, Congress were somehow made "responsible") the result would be to deprive the system of the energy that makes it work. That he is himself a very strenuous exerter of influence is evidence that he knows how to act effectively within the system, not that he wants to change it.

Although he may deplore it, the President must also be fully aware that the volume of demands placed upon the government is bound to increase. As Americans become more affluent, schooled, and leisured they discover (and also invent) more and more "social problems" which (they fondly suppose) can be "solved" if the government "really cares" (that is, if it passes enough laws, hires enough officials, and spends enough money). That one whose business it is to come to terms with reality, and who has shown himself to be extraordinarily adept at this business, will lead a "counterrevolution" against so conspicuous a feature of reality seems most unlikely. The President is a politician, not a preacher. His task and talent are for making things work, not for changing them.

The view that I am taking is in no way contradicted by the current budget proposals. The President is trying to curb inflation, avoid increases in taxes, get rid of programs that almost everyone knows have not worked, consolidate others for better administration, and turn responsibility for a wide range of matters back to the states and cities. Even if his budget contained no new initiatives (in fact it contains several major ones), it could not reasonably be taken as a portent of "counterrevolution."

The President's efforts to shift responsibilities to the states and local governments might perhaps be judged "counterrevolutionary" if he were

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leaving it to them to finance the programs. But this is not what he is doing. The fact is—although one would never guess it from the howls of mayors and governors—that the 1974 budget proposes to give state and local government more federal aid than they received this year (to make the figures comparable one must take into account that in 1974 public assistance for the aged, blind, and disabled will go to them directly rather than via grants to the states) and about four-and one-half times what they received a decade ago. And this although state and local governments are presently enjoying an aggregate revenue surplus which, if they do not lower their tax rates, is expected to reach some $13 billion in 1975.

I see revenue sharing and the New Federalism in general as a sort of domestic Vietnamization strategy under which Washington will provide the "villagers" with material resources and technical advice while allowing them to fight the "war" in their own way. This is not necessarily a strategy for winding down the "war." It may merely represent a facing of the fact, obvious in the Johnson administration but not faced by it, that federal programs have become too many and too complex to be administered from Washington. Another possibility—I find this more probable, although I do not suppose that it is the President's wish—is that the new strategy is preparatory to an escalation of the "war" and the opening of vast new fronts (health seems to be the most likely one now that education and welfare are both stalemated).

3) In my judgment a sound program in the area of social policy would involve a radical devolution of federal activities to state and local government and, beyond that, of many public ones to competitive markets. Such a program is, however, incompatible with the nature of our political system, which is energized by the pressures that interests exert to get things from government. Since I believe that despite its evident faults this political system is vastly better than any practical alternative, I am in the awkward position of having to conclude that a sound program is really unsound. When constituents begin asking politicians, "What have you *un*done for me lately?" the situation will improve.

Edward C. Banfield *is Kenan Professor of Public Policy Analysis and Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. His most recent book is* The Unheavenly City.

Nathan Glazer: 1) Writing in 1973, ten years after the planning of the poverty program began in Washington, I still find it very hard to give summary judgments on the Great Society programs. Whether one speaks of Medicare and Medicaid, Elementary and Secondary Education and all its titles, the programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity; and whether one considers Community Action programs, Head Start and its progeny, Legal Services, Neighborhood Health Care Centers, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Job Corps, or all the others; or leased housing, rent supplements, Model Cities, Section 235 (homeownership for the poor) or Section 236 (rental housing for the poor), or a great range of manpower programs (and one can of course expand this list considerably)—it is almost impossible for those of us who are not experts in given programs and their variants in fifty states and thousands of communities to give a simple verdict of "success" or "failure."

Even though I have spent most of my time for ten years on the study of such programs and teaching about them, I find it difficult to say with any great confidence that this should go or that should stay; or to propose improvements with any greater confidence. I believe some of the implications of such a confession of noncompetence are: (a) because of the federal system and the great variety of situations we find in regions, states, and cities, and indeed in neighborhoods of cities, many of these programs—such as Model Cities and Neighborhood Youth Corps and Community Action—have meant very different things in different places; (b) the design of these programs (e.g., emphasis on local variation, experiment, demonstration) often guaranteed that they would be infinitely various and thus difficult to evaluate as programs; (c) we have not had in any case very good systems of reporting and evaluation to enable us to make summary judgments—in the nature of the case (see points a and b) we probably couldn't; (d) the objectives of these programs—were they to relieve state and city budgets? employ more blacks and minorities? overcome deeply-rooted social problems? pay off the professionals enough to permit some non-professionals to get into the act? punish Republican governors and mayors and reward Democrats, or vice versa, depending on who was in power?—were often so mixed that for this reason alone the question of success or failure was a difficult one to decide; (e) the independent evaluations of these programs by outside social scientists suffered of course from all the problems described in a, b, c, and d above, as well as some special ones. Thus, it turned out we had much better studies of the beginnings of programs than of how they operated once started and once the initial phases of conflict were overcome. We know from Stephan Thernstrom's *Poverty, Planning, and Politics in the New Boston: The Origins of ABCD*, Peter Marris and Martin Rein's *Dilemmas of Social Reform*, Daniel P. Moynihan's *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*, and other studies, what was wrong with the

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design of the central part of the poverty program, the Community Action program, and how much unrewarding conflict was built into it. After it was more or less running at the end of the 1960's our data—at least in the form of good studies by social scientists—become sparser. Yet we may well be ending the program on the basis of what it was *intended* to be when it began, the confusion with which it started, the criticisms made of it then, rather than on the basis of how it is actually conducted in hundreds of cities.

I say we may be—I don't know. In each of these areas one must go, not to general pundits or experts, but to special experts, who have detailed and comprehensive knowledge. Yet when one does go looking one discovers in despair that no one has detailed and comprehensive knowledge. This is not a general confession that we never know enough to act; in some philosophical sense, undoubtedly we don't. It is a confession that we have designed our programs so that it is very hard to know enough to act. Thus, we know enough generally about Social Security to act (although there are plenty of complexities in that program, too). The same amount of money is sent out from a central point to everyone in the same status. The program's objectives are clear and simple, and thus it is easy to evaluate. It is not meant to solve the complex social, emotional, personal problems of the aged—what could? It has no input at all from cities and states and thus does not vary from location to location. It cannot be used to reward some areas and punish others, though of course Congress and the President scheme to see how they may take credit for one or another proposed change in this huge program.

Obviously Social Security is not a sound model for all social programs. There may be no way of dealing with the problems of juvenile delinquency, or declining neighborhoods, or manpower training, or medical care for the poor, using such a model. At the same time, of course, it could have been predicted that the design of many of the Great Society programs was one which meant that evaluation would be difficult or impossible. It was a design for pluralism, for conflict, for a mix of forces, for varied outcomes in different places.

HAVING said all this, let me pronounce a tentative summary judgment: the Great Society program was clearly not a uniform failure. No one basically challenges Medicare, Medicaid, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the affirmative-action programs, expanded manpower-training programs. The housing programs are more of a mixed story. The shift away from conventional public housing represented by the legislation of 1965 and 1968 was necessary and a major achievement. It increased the rate of building of subsidized housing units tenfold by fiscal 1972. Most of these units were being built outside the blighted central city areas. It is also true that the new programs offered a good deal of possibility for corruption and excessive profit-making, and increased the required subsidy payments on subsidized housing units enormously. Clearly some changes in these programs are necessary. But certainly one must pronounce partial success.

The most difficult judgments to pronounce are in the most original area, that of neighborhood-controlled social programs, as in Community Action and Model Cities. My overall guess is that as of 1973 most of the money in these programs (it is, by the way, not very much—about a billion dollars) is providing useful social services to children, youth, and old people, and a good deal of employment to people who are doing no damage and who will not in the future find it easy to get jobs as good as the ones they now hold.

If we ask, did these programs overcome "poverty" and its problems, clearly we have to answer no. I put poverty in quotation marks because I do not think it was really poverty we were talking about. We were concerned in the early 1960's with the anti-social behavior of large numbers of young people, with the failure of such institutions as family and school to socialize them into some form of decent behavior, and with the destructive effects of their behavior on city life. We were confused about why the transition from school to work was not taking place easily for so very many. If anything, the situation became considerably worse between 1963 and 1973. I do not know what the sources of such behavior are. Clearly they are in some way related to the experience of blacks in the United States, though Puerto Ricans in New York share in the behavior, and whites in other groups have also shown such behavior—perhaps not as marked—in the past, and still show some of it in the early 1970's. I will not list all the potential hypotheses. The fact is we did not know what to do about it, and still don't.

WOULD more money have helped? Frankly, I do not know—and I also do not know where it might have been spent to be a help. At first we defined the issue as that of the "drop-out." We have had a good deal of research on drop-outs since, and our conclusion seems to be that there is no particularly useful way of keeping all young people in school until eighteen or whatever age we define as being appropriate to earn a high-school diploma, and it is not particularly clear that drop-outs suffer by dropping out if there is an alternative for them to drop into (the army, an apprenticeship program, or something else). We tried to set up alternatives or supplements to school for drop-outs and potential drop-outs—Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Upward Bound, and endless other programs. Have they been successes or failures? Should we have spent

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more on them? Could we have? Once such programs were launched they were not necessarily overwhelmed with potential clients—nor did those selected necessarily stay the term. It is not easy to pronounce an overall judgment. One can tell horror stories on the one side ($11,000 a year per trainee for training), and presumably success stories on the other—a rather substantial number of people who had gone through episodes as drug addicts and juvenile delinquents ended up in college programs (how we evaluate this is another story, yet in almost any college I would guess there is some attrition of the most self-defeating and community-damaging kinds of juvenile criminal behavior, as well, of course, as a considerable importation of such behavior into institutions that would not have experienced it had they been more selective).

AMONG the rather severe criticisms of this type of 60's program was the argument that it represented a "services" strategy rather than a "jobs" or an "income" strategy. One should give Paul Goodman credit for making the simple division of the sums that were expected to be spent on Mobilization for Youth in the early 60's on the Lower East Side and pointing out that we would be better off giving the juveniles the money. An ingenious observation: but was it true? I wonder. As it was, we hired great numbers of social workers and consultants, increasing their income. Many of these—few at the beginning, more later—came from minority groups; we were providing the jobs through these programs for the barely college-trained that other programs were producing; and from the same communities. This was a minor benefit, but many pointlessly overpaid social workers are now finding it hard to get a job where their qualifications or experience mean much. (I say this without being sure it is true. Perhaps private business is taking them in, in view of the affirmative-action pressure. I think it may be.) The services themselves generally provided a place out of the cold for young people, might have led back to school or to college, and, less positively, offered opportunities for hustles. If the sums had been distributed in income to young people, their effects would have been frightfully disruptive. The already damaged families, with fathers absent or earning little, would have found even more power shifting to the adolescent young. Presumably they might have been paid *not* to be delinquent, as they often were in summer-work programs, and one assumes that would have helped somewhat in reducing anti-social behavior. But it sounds like a difficult program to police and evaluate. Had it been income instead of services, we would have been in the same quandary of evaluation we are in today.

Of course, "jobs" instead of "services" was always the more attractive approach. And yet we should not underestimate the difficulty of this approach, either. It was no simple matter to provide jobs for the young unemployed (the area where the problem was most concentrated and most severe) or better jobs for the large numbers of black men who had already dropped out by their twenties, and indeed were not to be found by the census until they began returning to be counted in their forties and fifties, burnt out. After all, we were not dealing with a mass unemployment situation during most of this period as we had been in the 1930's, when men with the experience of working, with the expectation of working, with habits that permitted work, were easily and usefully employed in vast numbers at subsistence wages. By the mid-1960's, such a population did not exist, and many of those who were not working would not work at subsistence wages. All sorts of developments, apparently good in themselves, had conspired to produce such a result: lengthening the years of required schooling, raising the minimum wage, liberalizing welfare. At the bottom was the race problem in American life. So even if we had moved to a large job-creation program, we would have *had* to build services into it.

The other great alternative to services, the guaranteed annual income, as it finally emerged as a feasible political proposal in the Family Assistance Plan in 1969, was superior to what we had, but it too did not reach the problem of the anti-social behavior that was destroying the possibility of decent life in the older central cities. While formally of course not a product of the Great Society, FAP was created by Johnson men, even if accepted by Nixon and Nixon men, and was part of the thinking of Great Society architects from the middle 60's. Its great virtue was that it was a way of distributing money to persons in families, money that would be less stigmatized than welfare, would go to men, and would go to workers. It would lift people some part of the way out of poverty without imposing the concurrent damage to family and work that the welfare system did. One of the reasons some of us were less than fully enthusiastic was that we saw something like FAP already in existence in the advanced states (New York) without the concurrent advantages which might have been expected.

I DO NOT feel the problem was insufficient money—there was often more than anyone knew how to spend usefully. I do not think the problem was services instead of income and jobs—many people needed the services. Jobs were certainly the best area for reform, and job-creation was neglected. Yet it is also true that unemployment was low in the later 1960's, and inflation a threat, and even job-creation would have involved an array of supportive services and considerable care to limit inflation. I would conclude: the new services were necessary, but they

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turned out not to be adequate for dealing with our severe problems; more jobs would have been the best supplement, but a job program would have had its own problems. Of course the awful Vietnamese war was in a way a job program—we were spending up to $30 billion annually more than we would have in job-creation, which served to devastate Vietnam rather than to rebuild the United States. But it did employ minorities, and in jobs which bore no relief stigma. Would things have been strikingly different if this money had gone into domestic jobs, doing all the things we need so badly in this country—rebuilding the parks, cleaning the streets, more housing and public facilities, etc.? This would have been infinitely better for the country, but one wonders how much it would have done for our social problems.

2) THE Nixon program, as presented in the budget for 1973-74 and the supporting statements, can be read in many ways. As I see it, there are a number of major decisions: (a) taxes will not be raised; (b) if they are not, there is not much money available for new social programs, in view of the enormous share in the "human services" budget that now goes to Social Security and Medicare; (c) as for the programs of the Great Society, the aim is to shift more and more of them into revenue sharing which will go to states and cities.

What is the effect of these decisions? It is not particularly to reduce money to *functions*, but it is to change the way in which these functions will be met. Instead of having education money mandated to the use of poor children, we will have education money to be spent as the local authorities decide. Instead of having manpower money spread over a variety of federal programs, it will be spent the way local state and municipal authorities decide. Money for community plans and programs will now come in the form of revenue sharing for community development, spent as states and cities wish, rather than under Community Action programs and Model Cities programs. There are a number of still undetermined questions here. Will there be as much money as there was, growing to take account of inflation? Apparently less. But that is owing to decisions (a) and (b) above, decisions in which Congress concurs and which indeed it has made. Will less of this money go to targeted groups, the poor and minorities? That will depend on the local political situation. On the whole, less will. But will the agencies that have developed a claim on funds in New York City, Chicago, San Francisco, and elsewhere, have any less claim on these funds if they come as different kinds of revenue sharing rather than as grants from the federal government? Certainly the politics will change. If the poor and minorities get less it will be because of insufficient clout at the local level—just as the proposals themselves reflect insufficient clout at the national level.

What of the programs for minorities specifically, stemming from the Civil Rights Acts of the 1960's? Obviously nothing can undo Negro voting power established by the Civil Rights Acts in the South—unless the Negroes of the South follow those of the North in not registering and voting. I do not believe that the administration has been particularly remiss (the comparison for purposes of defining a "counterrevolution" must be with previous administrations) in implementing the laws against discrimination in education and employment. The problems we are facing in this area are problems any administration would have faced, and the thrust to implementation from the courts and the lower bureaucracy seems to me scarcely to have weakened—in many cases it has been strengthened under Nixon, though of course it is less the administration than the bureaucracy and the courts that have been responsible. The fight for the opening of the suburbs to the minorities and the poor is a complex one—no one could claim there has been less progress under Nixon than under Kennedy and Johnson, though once again whatever progress has been made is, one assumes, less the result of administration initiatives than of the change in the economic capacity of the blacks.

A counterrevolution? Not quite. Little will change in the gross sums available for education, though a good deal may change in how they are spent. Medicare and Medicaid will grow (the new charges which add to the outrageous complexity of Medicare will hopefully be dropped, and both systems may yet be folded into a necessary larger plan for health insurance). The increase in families on welfare seems to have stopped, but that is owing to the actions of state and local elected officials, liberal as well as conservative. The neighborhood-controlled programs are now threatened—Community Action programs and Model Cities. They are already under mayoral authority, however, and already have their claws clipped, or have been incorporated into the legitimate political system, depending on one's political perspective.

Low-cost housing programs are under moratorium—but everyone agrees they must be coordinated, clarified, replaced by something else. The pipeline is fairly full, and Congress, which almost passed new housing legislation last year (and which in any case tends to pass its own rather than the administration's), can get to work again.

3) THIS is not to say I would not argue with the Nixon budget, but I would not use so large and loose a term as "counterrevolution." My own thinking goes along the following lines:

(a) When I read the criticism of the effect of dropping Community Action, Model Cities, and other programs oriented to neighborhood-level

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services, I am struck by how many of these services seem to be doing things that should be a part of any decent modern society. Thus, I see on the local Boston television that a program which provides one hot meal a day to older people confined to their homes is funded under Community Action. This, it is my impression, is what much of Community Action has become—various kinds of day care, summer and other recreation programs for youth, programs for older people. We huffed and puffed and fought to do what every modern welfare state considers a matter of course. We *should* have hot meals for old people, places where mothers can leave children so they can get to medical appointments or attend courses, more recreational facilities for youth, more centers where one can get advice on schooling and jobs, and so on and so on. All these require money. I do not think that on the whole the level of public services in this country is so high we can cut back on them, even if they are being maintained through untidy arrangements. I would prefer best of all to tidy up and upgrade the arrangements, so that the level of services available in such a well-run upper-middle-class community as Palo Alto, let us say, is increasingly available everywhere. The most important service is hardly available anywhere yet: comprehensive health care available to all, including the poorest.

My point can be expanded. If schools are in bad physical condition they should be improved. If teachers have large classes they should be reduced. If poor areas have insufficient clinics and doctors, something must be done to provide them. And so on, through the range of services of the modern state. Our object, to use the English term, would be simply "provision," not solution.

(b) Of course we should understand that these services will do little to reduce the truly agonizing problems of the inner cities (though some modest effect might be expected—reducing the strain on families reduces the need to break up families, better services for the very young may help in reducing anti-social behavior, and so on). We should undertake these programs because this is what a society should do—just as it should clean the streets, maintain lighting, insure clean water, etc.—rather than because we expect any "output" that deals with basic social problems.

Is there any direct attack, however, that might help? I believe the most useful tack for new social programs at the present is to consider the problem of low-paid, unstable work with poor or no fringe benefits, and to see what can be done to make it more stable, to attach fringe benefits, increase its security, and in effect make the low-income work which at present supports and must be the major support of the low-income population more rewarding and more attractive. Here is the one great area in which social inventiveness is needed, and surprisingly enough the one in which the least effort has been made. Consider—in order to see what is possible in such a field—what happened when the government introduced insured amortized mortgages on government-inspected houses in the 1930's. The entire trauma of house-owning—the prospect of losing a house because one could not meet the payments—disappeared. A mortgage was turned into something like rent, simply by a financial and administrative reform. Because the mortgages were insured and given on a property of known worth, they became marketable. Thus more funds flowed into housing, and more housing could be built. The banks still earned interest—indeed, more than ever—and people who owned homes still owned them basically on the payment of interest, but home-owning became possible for a good part of the American population because the Federal Housing Administration-inspected and mortgage-guaranteed house was devised. Can one devise such a government-guaranteed job for the worker—a job which offers a minimum wage, a guarantee of that wage as long as he is willing to work, health insurance, disability insurance, unemployment insurance and social security, vacations with pay, all attached to the job? It would take organizational innovation in the low-wage and unstable-job area, akin to the innovation once exercised in the unstable home mortgage-area.

Much of our ingenuity in recent years has gone into the effort to provide more money to the family without a worker or with a worker who provides less than a poverty income. We have made non-work more and more attractive in at least our more advanced states. Is it possible to do something now for work? While there are few incentives for employers to provide the work benefits that go with standard jobs to those less qualified (primarily in service occupations), it might be possible for the government to set up something like a "minimum job standard guarantee" program. The government would not provide the job, no more than it provides the FHA-guaranteed house. But it would provide the fringe benefits and the security that make it a real job. I have defined the objective of a program rather than a program. It has a good deal in common with other proposals—for example, house-cleaning by a salaried, uniformed service, rather than by an individual hired by the hour by a homemaker.

In addition to this form of job development, one can see almost limitless possibilities for additional employment in local public services, along the lines of the work done by paraprofessionals and in the Emergency Employment program. There are problems here of the relationship of such work to the civil service, of job security, and the like, but I think our experience by now should permit us to design good programs for public employment of the underqualified. Should the

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federal government design and mandate such programs in view of the shift to revenue sharing? I believe we should have a mechanism whereby, if the cities and states do not do their share, a federal job-creation program for public services would come into operation.

If one could provide a full array of welfare-state services on the one hand, and on the other hand do something to upgrade and stabilize the kind of jobs into which and out of which the low-income population drifts, we would, I believe, be doing the most important things the state can do to deal with our domestic problems. Our hopes would be modest. We would provide the means for people to lift themselves out of the mire, rather than requiring that they do so. And more than this a democratic state cannot do.

Even this much would be expensive. But there is no reason to think that the United States will be able to solve its problems by taxing its people less than do the governments of England, France, Germany, or Sweden. And here is a task for Congress, the administration, and for all those among us who criticize both. When we are ready to support higher taxes, we will be in a better position to criticize the Nixon program.

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Michael Harrington: 1) The Great Society scored some significant success which must be defended against Nixon's reactionary onslaught in 1973. At the same time, it was a fundamental—and structural—failure, and that point must be carefully understood. The Great Society's inadequacies were not due, as the neo-conservative wisdom now has it, to "throwing money at problems," to the hubris of planners who acted far beyond the limits of their knowledge, or to too casual, and radical, innovation. The hidden agenda of the Great Society was suffused with corporate and anti-social priorities, and the disappointing outcome of the effort proves not that we are somehow unable to translate our intentions into federal policies, but that basically flawed intentions articulated in a progressive rhetoric will yield basically flawed policies.

The point of my critique is not to argue for a retreat from the Great Society, as Nixon does. It is to demand new departures in which the excellent and far-reaching goals so often enunciated by Lyndon Johnson will be expressed in programs which can achieve them.

First, the Great Society did not "throw money at problems." In *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income,* Daniel P. Moynihan summarizes the evidence shrewdly: "The social reforms of the mid-decade had been oversold, and, with the coming of the war, underfinanced to the degree that seeming failure could be ascribed almost to intent." Yet in the Brookings Institution study, *Setting National Priorities: The 1973 Budget* (from which the statistics in this article, unless otherwise noted, will be taken), it is shown that, during the 60's, "federal civilian expenditures as a percentage of GNP almost doubled." It is clearly this latter statement which provides the statistical basis for Nixon's assertion that Kennedy and Johnson (or, more precisely, Johnson, since the quantum leap occurred between 1965 and 1970 and not at all under the New Frontier) were prodigal with public monies. How, then, does one reconcile Moynihan and Brookings? Why do I insist that the Great Society was not so lavish?

The answer is to be found when one looks at where the expenditure increases took place. Between 1960 and 1970, there was a $44.3 billion rise in the funds spent on Social Security and on Medicare ($33.9 billion for the pensions, $10.4 billion for health). That was three times as much as all the increased expenditures on public assistance (welfare, Medicaid, food stamps, housing subsidies, and student aid). Therefore, the overwhelming bulk of the 60's increments came, not in radical innovation, but in providing money for one program which was a generation old and inadequate (Social Security) and in achieving a very limited installment of a proposal (national health insurance) which had first been seriously urged by Harry S. Truman in 1949. Moreover, both of these expenditures were, and are, overwhelmingly popular precisely among those white working-class voters who are said to be the chief critics of the liberal prodigality of the 60's.

When one examines the Great Society programs which might be termed innovative, Medicare alone accounts for well over half the total expenditure during this period. The Office of Economic Opportunity, low-cost housing, and other ventures which might be thought of as new departures were, precisely as Moynihan says, "underfinanced to the degree that seeming failure could be ascribed almost to intent."

BUT if the problem with the Great Society was not the result of giving princely governmental support to the untested schemes of social engineers, where was the central flaw? It was not in the adoption of a "services strategy," though some failures in that area are particularly relevant to the underlying error. In the case of medical and legal care for the poor (and, for that matter, for the not-so-poor, too, most of whom are priced out of both markets) a service strategy

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is obviously needed. Fee-for-service medicine and law are neither practical nor economical ways to deliver such protection; both should be socialized.

However, Medicare (and Medicaid) does give hints of the basic problem, which is, that for all the grandiloquent rhetoric, the Great Society acted quite timidly. Medicare and Medicaid were partial installments on national health insurance, an area in which this society can hardly be accused of super-innovation (we have yet to catch up with Lloyd George—or perhaps even Bismarck). Because they were such limited increments they had perverse effects. They bid up the price of health, but not the ability to pay, for the working people who were neither retired nor poor enough to qualify for Medicaid; and Medicaid did provide an incentive for staying poor. In both cases, if the United States had acted boldly we would not have had such difficulties.

We did not act boldly, and the cause was inherent in the Great Society strategy itself. Lyndon Johnson built his programs upon the foundation of that amazing coalition which he assembled in the election of 1964. It included Henry Ford, Walter Reuther and George Meany, the more moderate Dixiecrats and Martin Luther King, Jr. It was therefore imperative that no Great Society proposal disturb the fundamental power relations of the society. As a result, the social programs were often suffused with corporate priorities.

MANPOWER training is a paradigmatic case in point. Throughout the decade, there were important individuals and social forces insisting that full-employment policies required that government become, at a minimum, the employer of last resort (some of us wanted it to act in some cases as an employer of first resort). This was the position taken by the labor movement and by economists like Leon Keyserling and John Kenneth Galbraith during the 1961 debates within the Kennedy administration on the relative merits of a tax cut and social investments. It inspired A. Philip Randolph's Freedom Budget in 1966 and was a recommendation of the National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress in the same year. This proposal was repeated with even greater urgency by the National Commission on Civil Disorders in 1968.

At no point did the Great Society respond to this suggestion. The manpower-training programs of the Kennedy administration were continued—but without the crucial element of guaranteeing a job to every graduate. And then Mr. Johnson created the Job Opportunities in the Business Sector program (JOBS) in which the government subsidized those employers who hired marginal, hard-core unemployed workers. JOBS announced remarkable achievements, most of which we now know were imaginary. It scored some very limited success in the auto industry but that became problematic with the recession so carefully started by Richard Nixon in 1969 as part of his "game plan" to deal with inflation.

The point is that the Great Society rhetoric often concealed corporate priorities. Thus, there was tremendous talk of great strides forward in housing for the poor, including the 1968 Housing and Urban Development Act's target of 26 million new units for the nation in ten years, 10 per cent of them for low-income people. But the actual outlays were small—a recent estimate has us 45 per cent behind the pace—while the subsidies for the rich were enormous. A Joint Economic Committee staff study last year estimated that tax expenditures for the homes of the (primarily) affluent were worth more than $12 billion a year. *That* is a radical housing program; it is also, one might add, a conservative, and antisocial, one.

Therefore I would not argue that the failures of the Great Society derive from utopianism, or from the hubris of the planners. They were the predictable consequence of the relatively conservative way in which so many of the programs were designed. (I say predictable because I did predict these results in *Toward a Democratic Left*, a book which was completed in 1967 and published in the spring of 1968.)

BUT if I am thus fundamentally critical of the very foundations of the Great Society, how can I propose to defend any of its works against Nixon? The answer is that there were some real successes, even if they were partial and inadequate. Under Kennedy and Johnson, unemployment was steadily reduced; under Nixon it was deliberately raised to Eisenhower levels and still remains at an intolerable 5.1 per cent. Medicare and Medicaid have all the flaws which I have noted, but they do represent an advance in human decency. Thus I find it outrageous that Mr. Nixon proposes to deal with some cost "overruns" in Medicare by cruelly pricing some of the aging out of care they desperately need. This is done on the basis of the undocumented assertion that it is the overutilization of services by patients which is the problem and without even a thought of the fact that doctors' fees are the main inflationary factor.

And the War on Poverty—even though it turned out to be only a skirmish before Mr. Nixon announced his peace without honor—made gains. Certainly the legal services for the poor, for all their limitations, were an effective innovation. Governor Reagan's rage, and Mr. Nixon's maneuvering to get the program under his centralized control, are witness to that. Community Action, for all of the hustling and foolishness done in its name, did contribute to legitimating the struggles of the impoverished. And the various employment programs—which the President

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will now phase out of existence—were progress, even if insufficient progress.

2) DOES all this mean that Nixon's 1974 budget is a "counterrevolution"? I think not. It amounts to a reactionary turn, a cheap, mean-spirited version of the already inadequate welfare state which he inherited, but not a new departure. Indeed, I take the first Nixon administration as the story of the President's conversion to corporate collectivism and the beginnings of his second administration as simply a process of making the conservative priorities in that approach more barefaced. When he took office, Nixon tried to act upon the true faith of Milton Friedman and the Chicago School, by trading off unemployment for price stability. The 1970 elections convinced him that the recession-inflation he produced instead would ruin his hopes for reelection, so in 1971 he announced his conversion to Keynesianism, applied wage-and-price controls, and indulged in the largest deficits since Franklin Roosevelt. Some liberals mistakenly thought that the President was coopting their program. That was not at all true. He was using Democratic techniques for impeccably Republican ends.

The result of these policies was, as George Meany told the Ways and Means Committee in March, to produce a "one-sided shift in the nation's income and wealth into the hands of corporations and stockholders." It was designed that way. Now the President is applying his conservative—but newly sophisticated—priorities to the welfare state. He pretends that he is simply attacking the inefficient and overly lavish innovations of Lyndon Johnson, but he really assaults the aging, the poor, and, as Meany understands, the working people. In some cases he is truly audacious. He attacks the scandalous mismanagement of the housing programs under his own administration as if it had occurred under Kennedy or Johnson and ignores the fact that the debacle of the "235" program for housing subsidies resulted, precisely, from relying on the genius of the free market with a minimum of government intervention. Only the genius of the free marketeers turned out to be a talent for mulcting the public rather than housing the poor.

But the basic thrust of Nixon's proposals, like everything else about the man, is political. He pretends to want to return power to the grass roots, to avoid bureaucratic centralization in America. That is the rationale of revenue sharing, and it is a fraud. The real point is to return power to the conservatives.

City Politics by Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson is helpful in elucidating this point (and not the least because its authors can hardly be accused of Bolshevism, of membership in the "new class" or the "conscience constituency" or any other such pariah group). It was the conservatives, Banfield and Wilson write, who insisted on planning provisions in the housing programs of the 50's. They "thought that local planning commissions, which in most cities had always been closely allied with real estate and other business interests, would afford some kind of check on the liberals who (as it seemed to the conservatives) dominated the housing and urban renewal programs."

So it is with Mr. Nixon today. He wants to refer as many decisions as possible back to state, municipal, and county government because he understands—perhaps the point became clear to him in the fight over urban renewal—that the "grass roots" as thus defined are usually conservative. Most of them can be counted on not to spend funds on behalf of the poor or the minorities or even the white working class, as the first reports on the use of revenue-sharing monies already make clear. And those big-city mayors who, because of the new political potency of the poor and minorities, might want to act on behalf of those in greatest need can simply be shortchanged. That is already being done.

In all this I do not want to picture Richard Nixon as some kind of moral monster who rejoices in the suffering of widows and orphans. That is neither true nor serious social analysis. He is a conservative ideologue, politically bound to corporate interests which demand that all innovations put the rich first. Out of sincere conviction, Nixon has been, and is, acting to make life worse for those who have the greatest claim upon our concern.

3) WHAT, then, should be done? I assume that the foregoing makes it perfectly clear that nothing serious can be done unless the Republicans are defeated in 1976. Now that they have become avowed reactionary Keynesians, they are much more dangerous, much shrewder, than when they remained the spiritual descendants of Herbert Hoover. (I am quite sure, for instance, that, if the current inflation goes on, as it likely will, Nixon will reintroduce some controls.) Therefore, the program which I want to urge is one which will unite a majority around a liberal Democratic candidacy. Those who think that the Meanyites should purge the McGovernites, or vice versa, as a way of winning in '76 are objectively playing the Republicans' game. So my proposals will seek to bring together the recently fratricidal factions of the Democratic party, for that is the only way to win three-and-a-half years hence.

Secondly, it should also be obvious that I cannot agree to the neo-conservative (or deradicalized liberal) proposition that, if only we would humbly aspire less, we would achieve more. The programs of the 60's worked; they effected the priorities for which they were designed. The problem was that too often those were the wrong priorities, and that when they were the right

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ones, we acted timidly and unimaginatively. Within this general framework I would propose:

(a) Tax Reform. The excellent proposal for some $20 billion of loophole-closing made by George Meany in March is quite close to George McGovern's campaign plank of last fall. Both Meany and McGovern understand that taxes must be raised by levies on unearned income. So I am for this idea on the political grounds that it can unify the college-educated alumni of the anti-war movement and the trade-union doves and the trade-union hawks.

However, my concern with the issue is not simply tactical. Insofar as tax reform might achieve even a modest redistribution of wealth —or at least neutralize the present impact of the tax code which is to shift burdens from the rich to the workers—it has a structural character. Tax reform might, for instance, limit the enormous power which the wealthy achieve because they own the assets of the society (the top 1 per cent of income recipients, *Business Week* recently reported, has 25 per cent of the wealth; the bottom 50 per cent has 3 per cent). And that could even mean a redistribution of political power.

(b) Full Employment. Nixon has been scandalously inept in this department, and his failure is apparent not simply to blue-collar workers but to Ph.D.'s, engineers, and college students. Moreover, a genuine full-employment program provides the context in which affirmative action to eliminate discrimination against racial, national, and sexual minorities can really work. A tight labor market in which employers desperately need blacks, Chicanos, and women would do wonders for their relative position (as World War II so dramatically proved within the domestic economy). Moreover, the way to full employment is through massive social investments to deal with the needs, not simply of the poor and the minorities, but of the majority.

(c) Health Security. Everyone in this society, except the very rich, is threatened by the inflated cost of medicine. The Kennedy-Griffith bill does not, of course, go as far as socialized medicine (which is desirable) but it is a gigantic step in the right direction. It even has some ingenious proposals for controlling costs whereas Nixon's bill—for all the President's rattling on about the Protestant ethic—would socialize the profits of the private health-insurance industry, i.e., of one of the main sources of inflation in this field.

(d) Housing. The nation should take a radical stand and attempt to redeem the promise made by the late Senator Robert Taft, among others, in the 1949 Housing Act to provide every citizen with a decent dwelling. We have had a quarter of a century of ignoring this promise—even though the 1968 Act reiterated it—and the time has come to fulfill it. This will mean the building of new cities and towns from the ground up, an idea which has been endorsed in recent years by such gentlemen as Spiro Agnew and David Rockefeller. However, *they* want such a scheme as a means of publicly funding guaranteed profits: I urge it as an exercise in democratic social planning.

In summary, I think that the Great Society failed, to the extent that it did, because it did so few of the right things it proposed and followed a hidden and corporate-oriented agenda when it acted decisively. Its gains must be protected against Nixon, but they must be seen as points of departure, not model accomplishments. There should be a guaranteed right to a job for every able-bodied citizen; to an income for all those who cannot work; and to a decent dwelling for everyone. I think that these things could make good politics in 1976; I even think they might help make, not a Great Society, but a Better Society. Such a modest first step is utterly necessary. Once it is taken we might even begin to act on the truly radical priorities these times demand. But if, as those who would limit social policy propose, we aspire less, then our problems will overwhelm us. There is only one way out and it leads forward.

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Tom Kahn: 1) I would not want to say that the Great Society was a failure because, for one thing, such talk gives undeserved comfort to the conservatives—which I am not eager to do, even if, on the other hand, I would not greatly mind seeing discomforts rained upon certain liberals who, either directly or owing to the spread of their wrong ideas, are accountable for much that went awry in the Great Society—and because, for another thing, it's not true.

No program that lifted fifteen million people out of poverty, reduced unemployment from 5.2 to 3.6 per cent, extended the right to vote to millions of disenfranchised black citizens, effectively ended segregation in public accommodations, and managed the longest period of uninterrupted economic expansion in our history—to name a few of the presumably uncontested accomplishments of the Great Society—no such program can be dismissed as a failure. Would that we had such failures from the Nixon administration!

What strikes me about these historic accomplishments is that they are mainly products of what have been called the traditional liberal-labor approaches to social policy—the "old New Deal stuff"—and are very little indebted to the

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vague social concepts that came to be enshrined in the New Politics. That is to say, the successes of the Great Society, so far as I can tell, were based on the pursuit of relatively high employment, economic expansion, accelerated public spending, higher minimum wages, increased education and manpower training, legislation of long sought-after civil-rights goals, and so forth, rather than on the self-organization of the poor, the overcoming of powerlessness, the decentralization of institutions, or the maximum feasible participation of anybody in anything (except in expanded job opportunities)—or on any other manifestation of that cruelly fraudulent claptrap that was fashioned jointly by New Left theorists, wily conservatives, and confused liberals, and whose main effects were to promote destructive confrontations, legitimize social bribery, enrich a new bureaucratic caste of anti-poverty officials, elevate racial hustling to a sophisticated art form, deracinate a stratum of inarticulate poor people and transmogrify them into professional meeting-goers and logorrheic media performers, and in other ways to injure, disappoint, mislead, demean, or neglect people in need.

If there is exaggeration here, it is only slight.

To trace the roots of what went wrong, let us go back to the beginning. In the beginning was *The Other America*, Michael Harrington's moving and important attempt to bring poverty to the attention of the literate middle class. Universally credited with sparking the war on poverty, the book shaped the way poverty was perceived by many intellectual and political leaders. It bears rereading after eleven years. Its "most important analytic point," according to its author, "is the fact that *poverty in America forms a culture, a way of life and feeling*, that it makes a whole." Indeed,

> One of the most important things about the new poverty is that it cannot be defined in simple, statistical terms. Throughout this book a crucial term is used: aspiration. If a group has internal vitality, a will—if it has aspiration—it may live in dilapidated housing, it may eat an inadequate diet, and *it may suffer poverty, but it is not impoverished.*

(What is it—enriched?) And, finally:

> If statistics and sociology can measure a feeling as delicate as loneliness . . . the other America is becoming increasingly populated by those who *do not belong to anybody or anything.* They are no longer *participants* in an ethnic culture from the old country; they are less and less religious; they do not belong to unions or clubs. They are not seen, and because of that they themselves cannot see. [All emphases added.]

This is very poetic, but what does it mean for social policy? Is it really true that a group may suffer poverty but not be impoverished? How can we measure impoverishment (as opposed to poverty)? By whose standards do we judge vitality (especially internal vitality), will, aspiration? What does it mean to say poverty is a way of feeling? Is one wrong to believe that one can see here the seeds of what later went wrong in the War on Poverty?

I do not mean—and surely not at this late date—to pin the blame for the debacles of "community action" on Michael Harrington, who has other burdens to bear. Actually, the programs proposed in his book run pretty much along the lines of the "old New Deal stuff"—and, indeed, that is the point. Like the Great Society itself, *The Other America* was schizoid—marking a midway passage between an inadequate past and a wrong future, between yesterday's Rooseveltian reformism which didn't go far enough and the "now" reformism of the new radicalism which went in the wrong direction. I cite the Harrington book to indicate how early this dichotomy, this fork in the road, appeared. Insofar as Harrington's portrait of poverty adumbrated the wrong future, it did so in two key respects. First, it focused on the personal characteristics of the poor—the old poor, the young poor, the black poor, the hillbilly poor, the rural poor, the urban poor, the alcoholic poor, the neurotic poor—an approach Leon Keyserling was repeatedly and brilliantly to ridicule as laying the basis for a grab-bag of fragmented, helter-skelter, and mutually contradictory programs instead of a strategic plan, comprehensive and coordinated, built around key national programs of full employment, economic growth, and income redistribution, and set within timetables, as projected in the 1966 "Freedom Budget."

Second, by playing on the theme of the poor as lonely non-participants, *The Other America* helped set the stage for the notion that we had to give the poor something to belong to, somebody to belong to. The somebody turned out to be John Lindsay—God rest his political soul—and the something turned out to be boards—poverty boards, planning boards, school boards, boards of directors, boards of trustees—all in the unshakable conviction of the middle-class activist that everybody shares his fondness, or need, for going to meetings, articulating like blazes, and "relating" all over the place. The result? Instead of the invisible poor and the silent poor, we got the vivid poor and the noisy poor—and the terribly participatory poor.

To SUM up my answer to the first question: the Great Society was not a failure, but it can be usefully criticized on two counts. It took a wrong turn when it translated the "culture-of-poverty" theory into community-action programs; and insofar as its other programs were on the right track, they did not go far enough—more on which later.

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2) YES, I believe Richard Nixon is leading a "counterrevolution"—of sorts. But it is not a fascist counterrevolution; it is not a racist counterrevolution (although it may well have adverse effects on the rate of black progress). It's not even a counterrevolution against freedom of the press or the Bill of Rights. It's a conservative Republican counterrevolution against the labor-liberal Democratic New Deal-Great Society programs in housing, education, employment, manpower training, health, pollution, and poverty. Specifically, the President proposes to slash these programs by $6.5 billion in fiscal 1973, $17 billion in fiscal 1974, and a cumulative $100 billion, at least, over the next five years. The rationale for this dismantling operation is that revenue sharing will enable the states to take up the slack. The answer, of course, is that the proposed revenue-sharing funds fall far short of the proposed cutbacks, and besides history has taught us that state and local governments cannot be relied upon to carry on these programs without strong federal intervention. But in any case this is not a terribly new debate—it's been going on for decades, generations. I don't see anything very surprising in the Nixon second-term program. He is a pragmatic ideologue who is trying to implement a conservative philosophy that has been a familiar part of the American landscape for a long time. Perhaps what is surprising, to some, is that he is actually trying to *implement* it. To salt old wounds, their surprise may stem from an earlier failure to have taken Mr. Nixon seriously. To have yelled "fascism," "racism," and "repression" was not to have taken Mr. Nixon seriously. To have taken Mr. Nixon seriously was to have supported the ABM (Anybody but McGovern) drive at the Democratic convention and to have gone all-out for Hubert Humphrey in 1968.

So, in sum, we have a conservative, though modern, President seeking to carry out a conservative, though modern, program. What is new and different is that he recently got 60 per cent of the people's votes—though not for his program. Our response should be not to deny his legitimacy or the moral capacity of the voters but to oppose his program on the simple grounds that undoing the gains of the New Deal and Great Society is not in the interest of the average American. Clearly—though perhaps not as readily apparent to the flakier New York intellectuals as to Washington observers—our best hope for preserving these gains, and thus the possibility of further gains, rests with the political clout of the labor movement and with the more sensible liberals on Capitol Hill. Other liberals on the Hill seem to believe that the worst thing Mr. Nixon is doing is dismantling the Community Action program of OEO. They are making a blunder: that albatross should be allowed to sink.

3) THE third question asks: What should be done? I think that what we should do is what we said we were going to do in the 30's and 40's, when we passed legislation committing the government to full employment and a decent home for every American family. How's that for a start?

I am much disturbed by the new fashionable talk that the trouble with the Great Society is that it tried to do too much, went too far, failed to recognize that "there are limits to what government can do." Of course there are limits to what government can do—just as there are limits to what private enterprise can do. But do those who use this language have any precise limits in mind—or, one cannot help but wonder, is Vietnam what they have in mind? Do they speak from a need, a wish, to see government power curbed?

In any event, I do not believe that establishing full employment is beyond the capacity of the government of the United States. I do not believe that it is beyond the capacity of the government of the United States to insure an adequate supply of good housing for the American people at every level of income. I do not believe it is beyond the capacity of the government of the United States, through the Social Security system, to guarantee a decent income to all senior citizens. I do not believe it is beyond the capacity of the government of the United States to provide, through something like the Kennedy-Griffiths Health Security program, quality health care for all citizens, regardless of age or income. I do not believe it is beyond the capacity of the government of the United States to give us real tax and welfare reforms, to control inflation, or to overhaul our broken-down system of criminal justice. And I do not believe that our failures in any of these areas had a damn thing to do with the war in Vietnam.

I am not here going to attempt to spell out the specific programs we need to achieve the goals mentioned above. The programs have been spelled out again and again in the publications of the labor movement; they were detailed in the "Freedom Budget." Our problem at the moment is not an absence of specifics but an overall mood of retreat, a sense of political exhaustion following the turbulent 60's. The mood may be understandable, but we ought to be prepared to combat it among ourselves, at least insofar as it leads us into that dreary can't-do-and-besides-there-never-was-a-problem-in-the-first-place syndrome that characterizes the new intellectual conservatism. Perhaps if we were to get on more vigorously with what government *can* do, we would acquire along the way a clearer idea of what government cannot do. The trouble is, the kind of rhetoric we are hearing now usually arises in periods when we are not doing, or intending to do, very much. One must hope that this time the talk does not mirror the times. It is all very well to complain that expectations soared too high under

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the Great Society. But there are legitimate expectations which the bulk of the people are entitled to have of their government, expectations having to do with jobs and housing and schools and safety. We have not really made an effort to meet *those* expectations in ways or proportions commensurate with our capacity. The effort to do so, I come increasingly to believe, can provide the basis for a political thrust which, if successful, will lead to social change at once deeper, more benign, and even more egalitarian than the 60's produced. I think our task now is to reawaken and reassure the people as to these possibilities—not further demoralize or confuse them, or ourselves. The New Left did damage enough. Let us not, in reaction, give it a posthumous victory over hope in the 70's.

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Christopher Lasch: To say that Nixon is leading a counterrevolution against the New Deal, Fair Deal, New Frontier, etc., implies that there was something revolutionary about those programs in the first place. Unfortunately this was not the case. Most of the social legislation of the last forty years has attacked symptoms rather than causes. For this reason it has done little to reduce inequality and poverty, limit corporate power, make people more secure against disasters that threaten their savings or even their lives, or extend popular control over government. Merely to list these objectives, which are scarcely utopian or radical, is to suggest how ludicrously liberal programs have fallen short of the minimal goals of a democratic social policy —goals on which almost all of us, presumably, can agree.

In most of these areas, the people of the United States are visibly worse off now than they were in 1933. Gross inequalities remain. Poverty remains. The big corporations are bigger than ever and no more responsible to the public. Most people still have no effective protection against the hardships of old age, sickness, or unemployment, while the rise in crime and violence makes it laughable even to talk of security. As for popular control of government, an irresponsible executive branch has achieved a near monopoly of political power, in the face of which state legislatures, Congress, and increasingly the judiciary as well are almost completely helpless.

Timid as the Roosevelt-Truman-Johnson programs were, they gave rise to intense alarm not only among the very rich, as might have been expected, but among large sections of the electorate. In the 1930's Republicans feared that the Democratic party, through its control of the new welfare and relief programs, would transform itself into a permanent political dynasty. Experience since the 30's suggests, on the contrary, that liberal reforms tend to be politically self-defeating. Because they seek only to redistribute inequality instead of eliminating it, liberal reformers are constantly dividing their own constituencies. The pro-labor legislation of the New Deal set off an anti-labor backlash when unorganized white-collar workers and professionals, originally attracted to the New Deal, began to feel themselves ground between the millstones of Big Business and Big Labor, victimized by inflation, and generally ignored. By 1952 the middle classes were ready for Eisenhower.

In the 70's Richard Nixon has made a similar appeal to the great American middle, the "silent majority," the people who supported the Johnson programs until it became clear that they themselves, and not the rich, would have to pay the price in one form or another. Johnson's poverty program, such as it was, too often pitted blacks against ethnics. Meanwhile the white working class also bore the main burden of school desegregation, while suburban liberals applauded from the sidelines. In addition the working class and the lower-middle class had to suffer the indignity of being called white racists. It is not altogether surprising that the white working class now supports Nixon, though not with much enthusiasm.

The ethnic backlash against the blacks is only one aspect of what has been called, perhaps too sweepingly, a cultural civil war. There is also a Jewish backlash, compounded of the bitter aftermath of the New York teachers' strike, fears of a black-Wasp alliance, and reaction to loose pro-Arab rhetoric on the New Left. Beyond that, there is a generalized, ill-defined revulsion against "permissiveness." This revulsion is widespread; it is confined to no single class or ethnic group. A vague sense that things are out of joint, that values and standards are collapsing, that respect for authority has declined, troubles people at almost every social level.

Because the Left has only ridiculed these fears, those who are troubled by the growing disorder they see around them turn to the Right, which promises to restore order even though in reality it has no idea of how to do so. The Left has nothing to offer except an extension of the meaningless personal freedom Americans already enjoy or are in the process of acquiring, the freedom to do your own thing. (What a rich social vision this threadbare slogan implies!) The Left is unable to understand the validity of the demand that authority speak authoritatively, that standards be upheld, that people be held to responsibilities beyond those of pleasing themselves, that work be respected, that life be regarded as a serious business and not as an endless series of experiments with "alternate life-styles." The Left

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sees in these demands—which are imperfectly but insistently manifested in the malaise of Middle America—only the death-throes of a discredited work ethic, an outmoded "middle-class morality." Accordingly the Left finds it impossible to understand the revulsion produced by the Democratic convention and by the McGovern campaign, seemingly a proliferation of new, anarchic, undisciplined "life-styles."

Nixon is riding high on the crest of this revulsion. An opportunist, a charlatan, a politician who has no idea what is wrong and no idea of how to right it, he nevertheless appears to take seriously the old values, the cultural distress of the common people. To be sure, he upholds these values in their crudest form and appeals to all that is meanest in the American character. Those who won't work can expect no more "handouts." Those who break the law must pay the price. The work ethic must and shall be restored (by the sheer force of Presidential preaching, no doubt). Thin, poor stuff. But to many people it is some satisfaction, after the turmoil and anxiety of the past decade, to hear the President defend the old ways without embarrassment, especially when his hearers are themselves uncertain about the value of patriotism, hard work, and other such austere virtues.

To say that Nixon is leading a counterrevolution or even that he is leading an attack on the welfare state gives him too much credit for leadership. Nixon is adhering to a time-honored strategy of Republican non-rule, following the line of least resistance. Republicans figure that while Americans periodically become excited over a New Deal or a Fair Deal, what they really understand is a business deal—a wheat deal, an I.T.T. deal, a deal with the Chinese, a deal with the Russians. Wheeling and dealing, Nixon keeps his friends happy and his enemies off balance. Meanwhile inflation soars, the cities stagnate, crime continues, a staggering load of unsolved problems accumulates—and the administration assures everybody that all these problems are being solved through its own vigorous action. It announced recently that the urban problem had been solved. This news will surprise and doubtless gratify those who live in cities.

The Democrats, divided and bewildered, are reduced to making an issue of aid to North Vietnam. They too now appeal to the worst in their constituents.

Nixon has no economic or social policy, no policy at all except to reduce federal spending (defense spending excepted, of course), to crack down on the press, to prevent public or Congressional examination of executive policy, and to punish "lawbreakers." The most imaginative act of his administration is the attempt to make "theft" of federal secrets a crime in the absence of the faintest legislative authorization for such a policy. If the courts uphold this interpretation in the Ellsberg case, the federal executive will have gone a long way toward making its actions completely immune to scrutiny or criticism. Favoritism, touching solicitude for the plight of the rich, suppression of criticism—these are the Nixon "policies," the policies also of his Republican predecessors. Peace, prosperity, and petulance.

If there is a counterrevolution in progress, it is a cultural counterrevolution. Nixon's real ambitions, it is clear, lie in the direction of moral leadership. He loves to address the nation on such questions as amnesty, an issue tailor-made to his purposes. Nixon was trained as a lawyer, as he rarely fails to remind us, and knows that amnesty means, literally, forgiveness. (Never mind that it means legal forgetting. Who can explain this distinction to people who have been taught since childhood to "forgive and forget"?) The President asks: Can we forgive those who have deserted their country in its hour of need? Those who rallied to the colors, the parents of those who rallied to the colors, the parents of the war dead—how can they in particular forgive those who betrayed their country? The deserters broke the law and must take the consequences. You can't get something for nothing. The draft-dodgers, the welfare bums, the radicals, have in common that they all demand something for nothing. They act as if society owed them a living. "Ask not what your country can do for you," Nixon has recently reminded us, borrowing the rhetoric of the New Frontier if not its celebrated "style."

Since this kind of language, echoed by many lesser orators, seems to be finding a ready public response, it is tempting to conclude that a resurgence of old-fashioned values is in progress. But this is to misinterpret the nature of the backlash. Traumatized by the events of the 60's, the public dotes on the old slogans, but few people believe them. Most of us now believe that it is a very good thing to get something for nothing. Indeed we believe, not without reason, that getting something for nothing is the key to success. We know that hard work is very likely to be its own, indeed its only reward, and we avoid work accordingly. We admire gamblers and con men; that is why we admire, grudgingly, Nixon.

The brutalizing effect of the war, the collapse of authority, the decline of public order and safety, Presidential lies, the increasingly obvious cynicism of the rich and powerful, have made Americans today cynical about everything. Everyone is presumed to be on the make, everyone is out for himself, everybody lies. The other side of this cynicism is nostalgia. People cast a sentimental eye on the old days. Nixon appeals to this nostalgia with his empty talk of the work ethic, even as he embodies the rampant cynicism, the total insincerity of our culture: truly a leader for our times.

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Ever since the Second World War, international politics has presented itself as a struggle between socialism and the "free world." After 1945 national rivalries within the "free world" were swallowed up in the struggle against Communism. The capitalist powers appeared to have achieved an unprecedented unity; wars between capitalist powers seemed as much a thing of the past as major depressions. These appearances contributed to the larger illusion that we had entered "a new era."

Today rivalry among capitalist powers is once again on the rise. Western Europe and Japan are challenging American economic supremacy. Sluggish, weakened by war and inflation, the American economy is highly vulnerable to this competition, both at home and abroad. The political structures of international capitalist unity have collapsed. Neither Western Europe nor Japan depends on American arms to defend itself against Communism. Far from regarding Communism as a threat, they have instituted closer diplomatic and economic relations with the Communist powers—an example the United States has now rather belatedly followed.

IN THIS highly unstable situation, in which conflict between capitalist powers has become even more threatening than conflict between capitalism and Communism, both the economic and political power of the United States has been vastly reduced. The Vietnam war will appear in retrospect as marking—and as partially responsible for—the end of a brief era of American supremacy. Many of the current troubles derive from the loss of this supremacy and from desperate efforts to recover it. An extended economic analysis would show in detail that the very measures necessary to improve the competitive position of the United States vis-à-vis the economies of Western Europe and Japan intensify the domestic difficulties that are so alarmingly accumulating. In general, it is obvious that the competitive disadvantages of American corporations cannot be reduced without lowering the standard of living of the American working class, either through attempts to speed up production—already in effect in many plants—through direct attacks on wages, or through increased automation. Until recently the technological superiority of American industry and the advantages of large-scale production compensated for the wage differential between American workers and workers in other industrial countries, but American industry is no longer more productive than or technically superior to its chief competitors. Any attempt to recapture its technical supremacy would place still greater burdens on the state, which has had to assume most of the costs of the research, development, and technical training on which technological advances in industry depend. This "socialization of the indirect costs of production" has already contributed, along with enormous military expenditures, to the well-known disparity between the public and private sectors and to the collapse of public services, and it appears unlikely, therefore, that the state can continue these indirect subsidies to American industry without further impoverishing itself or, on the other hand, without taxing the corporations—in which case the subsidies would cease to be subsidies.

A truly "sound program in the area of social policy," it appears, would have to rest on measures completely opposed to those favored by the corporations and, it must be confessed, by the majority of American voters at this time. Even the minimal goals to which most Americans are nominally committed—greater equality, security, etc.—cannot be accomplished by traditional liberal methods: this becomes clearer every day. The defense of the American system of "free" enterprise is no longer consistent, if it ever was, with the ideal of a humane society based on equality, freedom, and justice. As the quality of life deteriorates, the truth of this simple proposition will be generally acknowledged; the question is whether this recognition will come too late to arrest the spread of authoritarianism into every sphere of American life—for the collapse of legitimate authority will be resolved either by attacking the problem at its roots or by forcibly imposing authority, by institutionalizing official violence.

A sound social policy should adopt as minimal goals the reduction of defense spending, equalization of incomes, free medical care, a subsidized system of mass transportation, and political reforms designed to curb the power of the executive branch of the federal government. This is hardly a very sweeping program, but it would go some distance toward easing the plight of the cities and the desperate people living in them, and toward restoring a measure of political democracy. Since the current difficulties are cultural as much as they are political, any merely political program, even a much more ambitious program than this, is inadequate to the present conditions. Social reform designed to make our cities inhabitable is, however, indispensable; and even the modest program I suggest will encounter fierce resistance. In the light of recent experience, there is certainly no reason to be excessively optimistic about the prospects for *any* program of reform.

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Robert Lekachman: 1) In a great legislative explosion, Lyndon Johnson's Great Society sought simultaneously and quickly to cure poverty, revitalize urban life, achieve racial equality, beautify the environ-

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ment, equalize educational opportunity, redistribute political power, and liberate all groups in search of liberation. In its brief period of glory, circa 1964-65, Great Society programs enlisted shifting coalitions of Washington bureaucrats, university intellectuals, black and other organized minorities, and businessmen in alert search of new markets for educational hardware, medical supplies, and job-training services.

LARGE goals invite disappointment. Between 1965 and 1973, the number of poor people has diminished, but the principal explanation appears to be economic expansion rather than the strivings of the Office of Economic Opportunity. Moreover, as Daniel P. Moynihan and others have emphasized, the black middle class has flourished to the degree that little distinguishes the economic performance of young black middle-class couples from their white counterparts. Nevertheless, the condition of the cities is not reassuring, least of all to their residents. Even economic expansion does not suffice to alleviate the problem of welfare dependency and the continuing destruction of whole sections of the inner cities. Even for white liberals, the fear of crime threatens to overwhelm social altruism and increase the political attractiveness of local candidates like Mario Biaggi in New York.

The most obvious sign of the Great Society's failure is the weakness of general and Congressional resistance to present administration designs on the categorical-grant social programs. If Congress ultimately accepts special revenue sharing, its motive will probably be a reading of low public esteem for present arrangements. Current reassessments often make glum reading. Housing subsidy programs have been dreadfully administered and better adapted to the financial interests of builders and developers than to the needs of low- and moderate-income tenants. Manpower-training efforts have from the outset been misconceived: the necessary complement of appropriate public service jobs has never been forthcoming. Title I poverty education grants were often misused and, in any case, spread far too thinly to do much good. And so on.

A reasonable plea in mitigation is of course readily available. Most of these experiments were underfunded. Very little time has elapsed since the major statutes were enacted, too little to render final judgments. Great Society programs were compelled to compete for public attention and Congressional energy with the continuing national tragedy of Vietnam. Wars are notoriously hostile to social reform. The explanations do not disguise the social condition that for reasons good and bad the Great Society does not command general popular favor.

In part, however, this requiem mass for the dear departed is premature. Of the untidy collage of service, income maintenance, tax, and political strategies involved in the Great Society, one at least has a fair claim to durable impact. This is the legal transformation, the rights revolution, accomplished by an effective combination of legislation, Supreme Court decisions, and legal services ingenuity. In the South the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has substantially increased black voting participation and led to the election of rising numbers of black mayors, sheriffs, legislators, and Congressmen even in recalcitrant states like Alabama and Mississippi. The new law generated by successful class-action proceedings has considerably enlarged the rights of welfare recipients, public-housing tenants, migrants, and women, and correspondingly narrowed the discretionary powers of housing and welfare bureaucracies. Even though the future of legal services is clouded and a more conservative Supreme Court looks with diminished favor on imaginative readings of the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, it is unlikely that the courts will take away these recently acquired rights of hearing and appeal.

There is a related point. In all probability, White House plans to terminate Community Action and dismantle Economic Opportunity will succeed. All the same, Community Action has probably led to such lasting consequences as the development of new black leaders and the opening of opportunities for paraprofessionals who in New York City have secured effective union advocates. What works in the long run is political power. Even though the Nixon administration is neither beholden to the black community nor particularly sympathetic to its aspirations, the impetus to black political organization given by the Great Society is likely in a more promising post-Nixon national administration to produce both legislative and administrative benefits.

A FINAL WORD. Viewed from the Left, the Great Society was always a highly precarious enterprise, founded on a fragile combination of service and income benefits for the poor and tax reduction for the community at large. Its triumphs were matters less of national yearning for social change and a more just distribution of income and wealth than of a division of the spoils of economic growth between winners and losers in American economic competition. Once expansion slowed and foreign commitments expanded, the soothing era of annual tax reduction and enjoyable skirmishes against poverty came to an abrupt halt. No one can say with confidence how in the absence of Vietnam the Great Society would have fared. It is certainly accurate to note that the Vietnam escalation diverted money and moral energy from domestic affairs, required tax increases in place of tax benefits, and dissolved the momentary harmony of interest between the poor and the prosperous which for a historic

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moment in the mid-1960's had aroused great expectations.

2) PRESIDENT NIXON has constructed the most coherent conservative program in recent memory. In all seriousness, I think that his critics, themselves in serious intellectual disarray, ought to thank Mr. Nixon for organizing their thoughts and energies at least in opposition.

Premised on the psychological proposition that most people prefer to define themselves as successful rather than unsuccessful, the Nixon appeal is to the self-interest of the reasonably prosperous. His now famous rephrasing of the Kennedy inaugural slogan to read "In our own lives, let each of us ask not just what will government do for me, but what can I do for myself" is a poultice to the conscience of men and women, tired of social strife, and eager to pursue private gain in peace.

As a design, the White House legislative program incorporates five internally consistent propositions:

(a) It is a far, far better thing to curtail nondefense federal spending than it is to increase personal or corporate income taxes, close tax loopholes, or raise inheritance and gift levies, for the sufficient reason that private spending is socially more useful and individually more rewarding than government spending.

(b) If taxes are changed at all, it should be in the direction of still less progression. Low progressive personal and corporate tax rates encourage investment and innovation upon which rising standards of living depend. The weak and feckless will learn to walk more quickly on their own feet if they are encouraged to discard the crutches which the Great Society specialized in fabricating. Heavier federal reliance upon regressive payroll taxes to finance social benefits is a good idea because the practical impossibility of greatly increasing these taxes imposes a useful lid on foolish public altruism.

(c) In general, social spending should be diverted from urban and rural low-income beneficiaries for whom it has failed to do much good, toward suburbanites and pensioners, away from the morally suspect to the morally worthy.

(d) It is accordingly essential to dissolve alliances as old as the New Deal between federal agencies and their black, urban, and welfare clients. The categorical grants must go because they are the fiscal fruits of these alliances. As the importance of OEO and the Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare, Housing and Urban Development, and Labor diminishes either because of curtailment of funds or administrative reorganization, the power of the President and of elected local officials correspondingly expands. This is the crucial political implication of special revenue sharing. The legislation allows but crucially fails to compel local governments to continue existing social programs.

(e) In short, the President proposes to substitute local goals and program preferences for the painfully evolved national criteria of the federal agencies. Since city halls and state capitols are considerably more responsive to conservative and local business pressures than Congressmen and government regulators, the outlook under special revenue sharing is desperate for the future of federal programs targeted to racial minorities, inner cities, and poverty groups.

THE President's politics are as astute as his code message to the majority is clear. If blacks, welfare mothers, and other idle loafers lose much of the little they now derive from the public trough, so much the more will be available for self-respecting practitioners of the work ethic like thee and me. Furthermore, once they have come to think a bit, the mayors and the governors will still their childish clamor over reduced categorical assistance and come to realize just how politically profitable special revenue sharing contains the potential to become. Services to the prosperous and the politically important can be increased while, conceivably, property taxes are actually reduced.

The name of the game is fragmentation of old alliances among blacks, liberal intellectuals, unionists, and the Democratic party. In the context of the President's domestic scheme, some unionists gain and others lose. Prosperous building tradesmen and other blue-collar suburbanites are conspicuously included in the appeals to the middle class. The losers are likely to be relatively low-paid and vulnerable members of Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers, Leon Davis's Local 1199, and Victor Gotbaum's District 37 which depend either upon publicly supported government jobs, continued flows of Washington money to hospitals, or the indulgence of the Department of Labor. President Nixon's payoff to George Meany for AFL-CIO benign neutrality during the Presidential season was the lifting of Phase II controls and the issuance to the powerful unions of hunting licenses for better 1973 contract gains than the old Pay Board could have sanctioned.

There is no place in the New Order for a Family Assistance Plan, although once this scheme was proclaimed by Mr. Nixon as the centerpiece of a New American Revolution. Property tax relief is also postponed or jettisoned. And in the interests of price stability and labor discipline, the Kennedy-Johnson 4-per-cent unemployment target is discarded. As the 1973 *Economic Report* charmingly explains:

> When the condition that persons who want work can find it through serious search is met, the rate of unemployment as we measure it will not be zero. What it would be we do not know.

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Undoubtedly the number would change from time to time. But it is the condition which is important, not the statistic.

Nixon's plans pose several threats to the employment of the poor. As Title I school funds, Model Cities, and Community Action diminish or disappear, paraprofessional job openings will decrease. If Congress ratifies the President's phasing out of the Emergency Employment Act, 150,000 public jobs will disappear. And, as usual, acceptance of higher general unemployment penalizes most severely low-income, sketchily credentialed blacks, women, and teen-agers. An unemployment average of 5 per cent translates into 10 per cent black and 15-20 per cent teen-age idleness.

The Nixon thrust eliminates some social expenditure and redirects the remainder away from Washington agencies which have developed sympathies and alliances with their clients toward cities and states which are likely to spend the available money on their own working- and middle-class members. As an object of special national concern, blacks and poor people are to be dismissed. More money for general community services is to come from money now spent on compensatory education, regional mental-health centers, neighborhood health clinics, and other benefits which are currently means- or income-tested.

Counterrevolution is possibly a pretentious term. Still, the Nixon redesign of the federal social effort does reverse forty years of liberal effort to broaden the scope of social protection to include the very neediest and most vulnerable. The predictable consequence of the substitution of special revenue sharing for categorical grants will be to narrow the benefits available to low-income persons and enlarge those which flow to middle- and upper-income groups. As the political scenario is played out in the current Congressional session, it will become clearer whether or not this consequence of their choice is what the voters had in mind last November.

3) Democratic societies pass through conservative periods. Many have suggested that Mr. Nixon's landslide was enlarged by uneasiness over the prospect of "radical" alterations of familiar arrangements threatened by Senator McGovern. In conservative times, liberals, radicals, and egalitarians cannot sensibly anticipate that much of what they cherish will come to fruition. Allying themselves with the current suspicion of change, liberals and radicals would do better to try to preserve what can and should be preserved of recent social advances. In the immediate future, this ought not include last-gasp defense of farm subsidies (which raise urban food prices mostly for the benefit of large farmers and agri-corporations), unyielding support of housing subsidy programs without substantial reform, or insistence on all aspects of present versions of manpower training and health-care delivery systems.

The more feasible strategies focus on jobs and legal rights. A unifying rather than a divisive objective, full employment is also the most effective of anti-poverty programs. Thus during three Eisenhower recessions, the ratio of non-white to white income dropped from 57 to 51 per cent. According to a 1965 OEO study, a decline in unemployment from 5.4 per cent to 3.5 per cent generated 1,042,000 full-time positions for low-income workers and lifted 1,811,000 persons above the poverty line. A challenge to the administration on full employment is the sort of issue upon which blacks, liberal intellectuals, and the AFL-CIO can agree.

Of the Great Society programs, legal services, by general concession, has been the most successful. The preservation of the program in some form has been endorsed even by the American Bar Association. It is hard for Americans to oppose the extension to everybody of constitutional guarantees. Even if the legal-services program which emerges from the present uncertainty is less innovative than the poverty lawyers of the 1960's, it will be a valuable symbol of the continuity of some aspects of the Great Society's commitment to equal protection and due process.

It may be politically feasible to revive a more generous and less coercive version of the Family Assistance Plan, although here the President may have read the entrails accurately in discarding the idea. In sum, there are non-quixotic battles to be waged at least on the legal and job fronts and possibly on the income-maintenance front as well. Partly because of their own deficiencies, there is less hope of saving the service programs and least of all to be anticipated are tax strategies calculated to diminish the shelters now available to the affluent.

In the longer run, a program for a 1976 Democratic restoration begins with the mustering in a single army of the troops which kept Democrats in national office most of the last four decades. The emphasis ought to be on unifying issues, among them health, jobs, transportation, occupational safety, product protection, and sensible anti-pollution.

In the still longer run, the looming issue is whether political democracy and plutocracy are compatible. Those who like myself answer in the negative necessarily advocate redistribution of income and wealth. The tools are available if the will is present: permanent controls over prices and profits, serious taxation of gifts and inheritance, and increased reliance upon progressive imposts upon personal and business income. Extremes of poverty and affluence occasion social envy, auction public office, poison the channels of public communication, and damage the fellow feeling upon which viable, libertarian societies depend.

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Here there is a small paradox. "Radical" egalitarianism is less open to technical criticism on efficiency grounds than are liberal service experiments. Egalitarianism is defensible not on the ground that it is more "efficient" but on the argument that it is ethically and politically preferable to the available alternatives. One can discredit a program of compensatory education or job training by familiar computation of costs and benefits. Equality of condition as well as equality of opportunity are moral valuations challengeable only by those who are attached to opposing valuations.

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Bayard Rustin: 1) Did the Great Society fail? One need only examine the substantial progress blacks have made during the past decade, both in terms of securing their constitutional rights and in narrowing the economic gap between the races, to understand why the answer to this question must be an emphatic "no."

Let me make it clear that I by no means celebrate the Great Society as totally successful; government was in fact guilty of promising more than it could deliver and of raising the aspirations of the poor to heights that could not be fulfilled, given the political realities. But acknowledging its shortcomings is quite a different thing from dismissing the programs of the Johnson era as outright, though well intended, failures. The truth is that the poor have benefited from these programs; that government bureaucracy has been reformed, in the sense that serving the needs of the poor has become an essential function of the bureaucracy; and that, for the first time since the New Deal, the direction of social policy has been determined by a commitment to the principle of equality.

What, then, brought about the gap between promise and performance? I think there were three broad, fundamental weaknesses in the Johnson administration's War on Poverty strategy which substantially reduced its effectiveness. First, the objectives were short-sighted, with an emphasis on providing services; a more effective strategy would have had more ambitious and permanent goals, such as a guaranteed annual income for the poor. Second, the administration devoted a good deal of effort to programs which sought to correct the political powerlessness of minorities, at the expense of attacking, head on, the economic roots of inequality. (I am referring here to Community Action programs and, not, obviously, to the Voting Rights Act.) And, finally, a most serious weakness was the enormous underfinancing of the majority of programs.

THE consequences of underfinancing were crucial; in some cases, the lack of financial commitment has paved the way for President Nixon's current campaign to discredit liberal social formulas. As Leon Keyserling has demonstrated in his analysis of the federal program to provide decent housing for the poor, the refusal to provide massive financial aid can undercut an entire social program:

> The reason why the federal effort to rehouse low income families "failed" is that it has not been tried, except in token form. An annual building program averaging one-twentieth of the annual need has inevitably raised almost as many problems as it has solved. It has tended to make "poor houses" of the public projects. It has permitted the slums to remain in full force. It has perpetrated one of the most dangerous of all social errors, to offer promises rather than performance.

By citing Keyserling, I am not proclaiming, as some on the Left have, that the failure of this or that Great Society program invalidates the traditional objectives of liberal social policy. Keyserling himself observes that the federal housing program has done an "immense amount of good." Between 1960 and 1970, the percentage of metropolitan-area black families occupying housing with inadequate plumbing facilities declined from 24 per cent to 7 per cent. While this can be traced, in part, to the general improvement in the economic status of blacks, it must certainly be a partial result of the expansion of public-housing projects, programs of apartment rehabilitation launched under federal aegis, and reforms of the discriminatory policies of government-assisted housing-finance agencies—all of which were a part of the much maligned Great Society housing effort.

And while the services approach contributed to the haphazardness of federal social programs, wherever the services provided were those basic to the day-to-day experience of the poor, much good was accomplished. The reduction in the educational gap between the races is a good illustration of this. Recent statistics indicate that black high-school graduates are enrolling in college in roughly the same proportion as their white classmates. The dropout rate has also been substantially reduced. The average black youngster today has completed twelve years of schooling; in 1960, only 36 per cent of non-white males and 41 per cent of non-white females had completed four years of high school. I consider it inconceivable that the educational programs of the Johnson years did not have something to do with the dramatic improvement.

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2) Is RICHARD NIXON, then, waging a "counter-revolution" against Johnson's liberal social policy? I think the answer must be "yes." The implications of the "New Federalism" are of a fundamental departure from the basic relationship between government and those whose interests are served by social progress, a relationship that has been a cornerstone of liberal doctrine.

The current budget contains but an inkling of the massive transformation of government functioning which I see as the ultimate Nixon objective. Nixon seeks, first, to institutionalize the philosophy that liberal social change is unworkable and that the federal government's role should therefore be reduced to that of caretaker, reacting, perhaps, only in crisis situations. Second, Nixon hopes to reinforce the preeminent position business enjoys among the forces striving to dominate the formulation of government policy. While this has been a traditional function of Republican administrations, Nixon's approach is more calculated than that of his GOP predecessors.

It is this commitment to business interests that has produced the massive public-relations campaign to discredit the Great Society, that has impelled Nixon to appoint those with corporate backgrounds to a high percentage of policy-making posts, and that has caused him to refuse to countenance tax reforms. It has even influenced the administration's approach to minority advancement: black capitalism, a scheme which the President has wholeheartedly endorsed, has proved as ineffective as any program which the administration proposes to cut back. Yet, precisely because it appeals to such a narrow constituency—there are, after all, few black capitalists—and therefore raises few expectations, it has a stabilizing effect which broad social-spending programs do not.

The most "revolutionary" aspect of the New Federalism, and also the most ominous, is the transfer of spending powers from Washington to the states and municipalities. The implications of the revenue-sharing concept cut much deeper than the specifics of the budget cutbacks. For while Nixon may refer to what he is doing as decentralization, local autonomy, or whatever, I propose that he is really paving the way for a renaissance of a familiar tactic—a new States' Rights manifesto.

This is not to suggest that Nixon seeks the reintroduction of Jim Crow, although the abrupt dismissal of Father Hesburgh as chairman of the Civil Rights Commission, the handling of Supreme Court appointments, and the efforts to emasculate the Voting Rights Act are indicative of Nixon's lack of regard for the issues which the civil-rights movement saw as basic. But by handing over to local authorities the responsibility for spending policies, Nixon has at one stroke enhanced the power of those who have been the least able to respond to the need for social change.

This is why I find the widespread favorable response of liberals to the principles of revenue sharing unsettling. The civil-rights movement, it should be kept in mind, did not succeed simply in extending the rights of minorities; it was also largely responsible for discrediting the principle of states' rights as applied to a broad range of policy questions. The movement taught us that the states and cities could not respond to the social needs of the poor and disadvantaged; eventually, this idea began to be reflected in basic government policy. It appeared that the liberal ideal of a strong, socially responsible federal government was about to be realized.

At this juncture, acceptance of the revenue-sharing philosophy could have profound consequences. There exists, for example, a genuine housing crisis in the ghettos, a crisis that will only be exacerbated by the moratorium on housing programs imposed by the administration. If, as seems likely, the responsibility for determining urban-development priorities is handed over to the mayors, there is little likelihood that those areas which most critically need help will see much of that money. What we may in fact witness is a revival of the urban-renewal policies of the past, with high-rise luxury apartments going up amid the slums.

The Left bears substantial responsibility for this situation. Decentralization has become attractive at least partially because of those who have decried the powers of Washington while insisting, from a leftward vision, that the fundamental task is bringing government "closer to the people." Among whites, this attitude permeated the New Left and ran strongly among the reformers who dominated the McGovern campaign. For blacks, it was reflected in the emphasis on "nation building" at the expense of broad strategies for social change.

THE antagonism to government which has sprung up among liberals is also to be found in the criticism of what is often referred to as the "distant and unresponsive" bureaucracy. Such criticism does not take into account the often progressive role played by the federal bureaucracy during the Johnson administration. It was a bureaucracy which compelled reluctant school boards to use funds for compensatory education programs for the low-income pupils for whom such money was intended. At the same time the Department of Housing and Urban Development began to insist that—regardless of real-estate and other interests—urban-renewal projects were to include provisions for low-income housing as well as middle-income housing and that relocation programs be carried out in a more equitable manner. HUD thus assured that these projects would serve as instruments for social progress.

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3) CONSIDERING the current state of affairs, the question of what constitutes the limits of social policy I find irrelevant. The issue is not an academic debate over whether we have reached the outer boundaries of orderly liberal change; we have not even succeeded in achieving the modest goals of the Great Society.

Nor is the problem, as some would have it, that the Great Society attempted too much; on the contrary, it did not go far enough, and, more to the point, it employed strategies that, from both political and policy standpoints, were often counterproductive.

Nothing that has transpired in the past decade has led me to conclude that we cannot achieve massive, fundamental change or that such change cannot come about in a democratic and orderly fashion. The specifics of what might constitute a truly progressive program were spelled out in 1966, when A. Philip Randolph proposed the "Freedom Budget." The Budget outlines a plan for social reform that would accomplish the following:

> Provide full employment for all who are willing and able to work, including those who need education or training to make them willing and able; assure decent and adequate wages to all who work; assure a decent standard for those who cannot or should not work; wipe out slums and ghettos and provide decent homes for all Americans; provide decent medical care and adequate educational opportunities for all Americans, at a cost all can afford; purify our air and water and develop our transportation and natural resources on a scale suitable to our growing needs.

While its scope is massive, such a program should not be labeled utopian. It can be achieved precisely because it is broad enough to deal with the political problems which plagued the Great Society and which, during the Nixon administration, have been magnified by the administration's economics of scarcity. The basic thrust of the "Freedom Budget" is a full-employment, full-production economy, and a program of fundamental tax reform, all of which the majority of Americans finds acceptable. It rejects the assumption that social spending must be accompanied by reductions in defense spending. Nor does it accept the current theory that economic growth is incompatible with a humane and progressive society; it rather seeks to stimulate the economy to produce the homes, schools, anti-pollution devices—whatever is necessary to fulfill the basic needs of society.

Today, many people are despairing as to the possibility of implementing any sort of liberal social program. I think these people are mistaken. They are misinterpreting the mood of the electorate after the recent election. To perceive McGovern's defeat as a repudiation of liberalism is, I submit, a misreading of what the voters were saying, a misreading which could have disastrous consequences. Liberalism was not rejected; the failure of the Republicans to improve their position in Congress demonstrated a continued faith in the traditional principles of liberal economic policy. McGovern's assertion that he lost because the voters came to see him as the representative of blacks is incorrect; a more accurate interpretation is that McGovern lost because some felt he was speaking only to the needs of minorities. Although McGovern's tax-reform package was the most radical ever proposed by a Presidential candidate, the candidate who did the proposing had, as a matter of fact, never addressed himself to economic issues during a Senate career. He simply lacked credibility in this area.

Nevertheless, both before and after the election Americans have expressed a continuing faith in liberal economic reform. Public-opinion polls have shown two-thirds of the American voters expressing dissatisfaction with Nixon's economic policies. A majority feels he is too closely aligned with business. At the same time, national health insurance, tax reform, and other programs that would require basic changes have elicited strong support.

Finally, I do not consider the proposals entailed in the "Freedom Budget" as the final expression of liberal social policy. Beyond the "Freedom Budget," however, I prefer not to speculate on the direction of sound social policy. I consider such speculation, at the time when we are so far from the basic goals for a decent society, as gratuitous as to theorize over whether we have reached the limits of social change.

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Gus Tyler: The Great Society of President Johnson was an extension of the New Deal, as were Truman's Fair Deal and Kennedy's New Frontier. The Nixon era—as it begins to emerge in his second term—is a reversion to the old deal. Although the conflict between "old" and "new" may be simplistically put as the contrast between laissez faire and the welfare state, these labels are—at best—just code names for more complex and concealed differences.

The welfare state rested on four tacit theorems: first, government can—and should—play an active role in bringing about social change. Second, the prime political push has to come from the *federal* government. Third, a basic commitment of federal government is to full employment, to be realized by expanding aggregate demand. Fourth, there has to be *public* investment to provide people with those services that would otherwise be

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out of their reach—even if they have jobs at reasonable pay.

None of the Democratic Presidents has been able to hold unswervingly to these dicta, without making concessions to passing pressures. But the general direction has been the use of federal initiative and intervention in the economic life of the nation to "promote the general welfare."

On all counts, Nixon acts on assumptions contrary to those of the New Deal. First, the government can do little to effectuate social change. Second, the "muscle-bound" federal government should turn over initiative and responsibility to "grass-roots governments" at the local level. Third, full employment is not a cardinal commitment, and, if the economy needs a lift, the encouragement should come not by increasing labor's buying power but by enlarging capital's investing power. Fourth, government—especially federal government—should get out of the business of providing "services" and ought to let people "buy" what they need in the open market.

While Nixon, like his Democratic forerunners, has had to adjust policy to political necessities (Phase I and Phase II being dramatic examples), the thrust of his administration, especially in the second term, is toward the pre-Rooseveltian precept of "rugged individualism."

Ironically, Democratic policies were far less ideologically motivated than are current Nixon programs. Roosevelt and his successors invented *ad hoc* answers to crying questions. Nixon is trying to apply a *theory* out of the 19th century—that government is best which governs least—to the challenges of the late 20th century.

Will this work? I don't think so—if anything can be learned from past experiences or present exigencies.

The mother of the New Deal invention was necessity. Politics *had* to step into the economy if the country was not to fall apart. So the government acted, doing all those things that private enterprise could not do (too fragmented) and would not do (no profit in it). As a consequence of these Rooseveltian initiatives, continued by his successors, profound and enduring social changes took place in America: mainly, an economic lift that restored the national spirit.

While it is customary to describe this transition as a shift from laissez faire to the welfare state, such a definition is unduly simplistic. The government has always had a big hand in the economy, from the Colonies to Coolidge. British kings (government) made land grants to favorites who converted their real estate into private preserves for self-enrichment. Hamilton pushed successfully for national policies to foster business. After the War of 1812, the government wrote tariffs to protect infant industries. Commercial monopolies, such as the Bank of the U.S., were chartered by the government. Private corporations were subsidized to build and run highways, canals, and railroads. Federal troops broke strikes; courts handed out labor injunctions; public properties were "given away" to the politically influential; sales taxes were enacted to soak the poor and loopholes were contrived to exempt the rich; corporations bought judges, legislators, governors, Senators, because they knew the economic power of politics.

The New Deal was not really the beginning of governmental intervention in the economy. But it was the first continuing program of government on behalf of the unempowered against an Establishment that used the mouthings of laissez faire to make certain that "government of the people" would not be "for the people." Bluntly—laissez faire as a practice never existed. The real question has always been: on whose side shall the government intervene? Prior to Roosevelt, the government had—by and large—been the "executive committee of the ruling class." After Roosevelt, the common man put a few of his people on the committee.

The grand lever of the liberal era has been the federal government—again not because of any ideological enchantment with Washington but because of the total incapacity of state and local government to cope with the complexities of a metro-industrial society. The states were not inclined to act because their legislatures had been districted and apportioned to maintain a rural regnancy for eternity. This control of states by the 18th-century mind meant (a) they would not respond to 20th-century urban problems; and (b) the states would not give their cities the power to do so. The few states that did respond somewhat—like New York and Wisconsin—did so at a high risk: factories and finance would flee the "better" states for the bad states, where they could get bargain rates on labor and taxes. The life-and-death crisis of the society—the great Depression—arose from the total system, nationwide, and could not be resolved locally—no matter how much Hoover exhorted folks to organize "block aid" to help a distressed neighbor.

The federal impetus stimulated the growth of positive social action at the state and local level. While the number of federal employees has been almost constant (between 2.2 and 2.4 million), the number of state, county, and municipal employees has risen from 4.6 million (1955) to 10.5 million (1970). Federal funds to cities have liberated them from the stultifying shackles of state legislatures. The "better" states have found it easier to move ahead because standards in the "bad" states have been elevated by federal action. Whole new categories of social action have been opened as the federal government has moved funds to lower levels for housing, hospitals, education, mental health, nurseries, research, transportation, law enforcement, senior citizens, youth

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activities, job training, Headstart, sewage treatment, outreach programs, etc. It was federal initiative and funds that vitalized state and local government.

The heart of these policies was full employment, to be obtained by increasing the buying power of "the people." This was done by work and make-work projects, federal minimum wages, unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, aid to the blind and handicapped and dependent children, and—the encouragement of collective bargaining. While all the Democratic Presidents, in greater or lesser measure, also made government funds directly available to business enterprises, they assumed that "trickle down" was a far less effective way to stimulate the economy than "perk up." In due time, this "aggregate demand" was significantly "expanded" by direct public spending (investment) in necessary social efforts.

PUBLIC investments, like the rest of the liberal program, was born out of need. Once people got jobs and made some money, they were still left with unmet needs: schools for the children, homes for the aged, hospitals for the sick, medical attention for the family, day-care centers for children of working parents—to name a few examples. These services could, of course, all be bought on the open market—if you could afford it. But most low- and middle-income families could *not*, since such services were not available at budget prices from entrepreneurs motivated by profits. To meet these unmet social needs, the government went into the business of housing, education, day care, Medicare, Medicaid, mental health, rural electrification—either directly or indirectly. The "services" strategy became a necessary part of the "income strategy."

By the 1960's, it was sensed that even "full employment" was inadequate. There was a large chunk of America—black and white—that had been so crippled by its past that it could not function in an urban society, whether as workers, parents, students, or law-abiding citizens. To leave these families to themselves would perpetuate the poverty cycle. Hence, government had to lend a helping hand: to acculturate new generations, to train for jobs, to prepare for education, to foster a self-image of worth and dignity. This was an attempt to undo the damage of decades and generations and to do so quickly with the totally inadequate funds offered by a House of Representatives in the hands of a conservative coalition. A small and hasty start was made with consequences that can only be measured decades and generations later. But the first daring dangerous step was made in the long journey out of night.

Although I have been hesitant, almost embarrassed, to present this short history of the Democratic purpose from Franklin Roosevelt to Lyndon Johnson, I find it necessary to do so to offset the neo-conservative arguments for the current Nixonian doctrines that totally ignore the lessons of our most recent and significant historic experiences. I feel that the liberal progression has provided tools that were valuable in the past and that will be indispensable for the future.

This is not to claim that the application of liberal principles over the last generation has remedied all our social ills: a few were cured; others were checked; some were overlooked. In the last few years, new illnesses developed, the most crucial of which—in my opinion—are the urban crisis, the maldistribution of income, and the environmental peril. In all cases, I believe, these maladies call for a strong dose of governmental medicine at the federal level.

The urban crisis cannot be resolved *by* the cities *in* the cities because the mess did not begin in the cities; it began in rural America. In two decades some twenty million dispossessed were driven from soil to city by the contrary policies of increased agricultural productivity and curtailed agricultural production. On a tidal wave of migration, these unacculturated hordes poured into urban America, carrying with them the classic upset of the uprooted, expressed in poverty, dependency, delinquency, crime, and riot—just as in Dickens's England. To the inevitable conflict was added the ingredient of race, since so much of rural America (the Southeast) was black. The cities were totally unprepared for such an invasion of the "vandals." The nation was—until quite recently—even unaware of this demographic disaster.

The crisis hit us precisely because there was *no* national policy on what to do with the agricultural "fall-out": the new nomads of America. Their inpourings have packed about 75 per cent of the American people into less than 2 per cent of the land area, while half the counties of the nation have been losing population. A rational remedy for this madness has been repeatedly proposed, most recently by a National Commission on Urban Growth Policy, suggesting a redistribution of populations by a reversal of the flow: the creation of some two hundred new communities by the year 2000. The impetus for such a program will never come from the cities or small-town America. The drive—policy, power, funds, plans—must come from Washington. Without such an "inner space" program, New York, Los Angeles, and even Philadelphia may all become just another Calcutta: an urban jungle.

How does one finance such a multi-trillion-dollar project? At present, Uncle Sam does not have the money. But—at present—some $50-60 billion a year is lost to the federal treasury through "loopholes." The American people are too poor to do many things because the affluence of the nation is outside the reach of the people. There

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is a top 2 per cent that has annual income equal to the bottom 40 per cent; a top 10 per cent of families has income equal to the bottom 60 per cent. The same top 2 per cent is the beneficiary of the great tax exemptions. So long as the riches of the nation are thus locked up at the top, every decision to redistribute the remaining income becomes a bloody battle among the "tribes" in the lower 80 per cent, especially mean and violent among the bottom 40 per cent.

Despite the New Deal and its progeny, income in the U.S. has not been "redistributed" since the beginning of the century. The reason? Ownership has become—if anything—more concentrated than in the past and—as always—income is a function of income-producing wealth. (A top 1 per cent owns about 75 per cent of the privately-held corporate stocks, 85 per cent of the bonds, and 95 per cent of the municipal bonds.)

To redistribute national income will require radical changes in the system of taxation and/or ownership of income-producing wealth: lands, corporations, financial institutions. Clearly, such policies must flow from a national commitment to restructure the economy. Bedford-Stuyvesant, on its own, cannot redistribute the wealth of America.

In the past, the U.S. has avoided the violent political consequences arising from a gross maldistribution of income primarily because of phenomenal economic growth: the gross national product has grown more rapidly than the population, so that without changing the "shares" (slices of our Great National Pie) there has been a bigger piece for everyone.

Continuation of growth, however, is seriously challenged at present by the "ecology" people who fear the rapid exhaustion of resources like fuel, water, air, usable soil—even living room. Whether these fears are alarmist or well-founded, it is agreed that the nation can no longer go its blithe way unmindful of what happens to our environment and our limited resources. Hence, we need national—perhaps international—policies on ecological problems.

Such policies are necessarily economic and political. Some examples: (a) Much of the GNP is made up of useless or even noxious items that devour valuable, sometimes irreplaceable, resources. The public interest may well require a discouragement (prohibition) of such production while shifting manpower and funding (almost necessarily public) to projects like scrubbing Lake Erie and detoxifying poisoned soil; (b) steps to combat pollution, to restore damaged environments, to ration resources are a cost that must be absorbed by someone: either the consumer, or the worker who must do with a smaller wage, or the corporation that will accept a smaller profit, or the public by taxation. The last (taxation) will, in turn, require political decisions as to who (what class) shall pay the tax.

These challenges can only be met with a series of interlocking policies on population control, new communities, income distribution, fuel, water, air, soil, temperature, transportation, resources. None of these policies is possible—and certainly not possible in *gestalt*—without an initial decision to have *national* policies.

The entire Nixonian predisposition is to the contrary: the administration favors little over big government—local over federal, cheap over expensive, weak over strong. This plea for pusillanimity is puffed up grandiloquently as "the New Federalism," or "the Second American Revolution," or "grass-roots government," or "the fulfillment of the American dream." But as the New York *Times* put it: "The dream looks remarkably like right-wing nostalgia for the days when individual self reliance and states' rights were regarded as a sufficient answer for every complex social problem."

CURRENTLY, this retreat from federal social responsibility is paraded as a magnanimous advance to revenue sharing—Uncle Sam being kind to his nieces and nephews. Originally—under its inventor, Democrat Walter Heller—that is exactly what revenue sharing was: a way to use the federal tax power to give more money to local governments for their general purposes. When Congress last year voted a five-year $30-billion plan for revenue sharing, it thought it was giving the cities additional money—over and above what they were getting in categorical aids from the federal government for housing, education, and a wide spectrum of social services. "But things don't seem to be working out that way," reports the *Wall Street Journal* (February 26). "For, right now at least, revenue sharing is promising little revenue and less sharing. . . . The President has decided to use revenue sharing not only as a device for radically altering the way federal money is disbursed to the states and localities but also as a mechanism for dismantling many of the Great Society social-aid programs inherited from the Johnson administration. . . . What's shaping up is a substantial—in some cases, perhaps, even massive—withdrawal of federal funds from a wide variety of programs."

The "wide variety" goes far beyond controversial items like Community Action programs. "He [Nixon] is suspending some programs (subsidized housing), terminating others (hospital construction), and impounding funds and sharply reducing spending for still others (manpower training)," reports the *Journal*. Nixon plans to "withdraw federal money for neighborhood mental clinics, hospital construction, and regional medical programs," reports the *Times* on March 5. He is withholding funds for a rural environment program; he is rewriting the rules for day care so that working mothers will not be able to place their children in federally subsidized facil-

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ities; he is rewriting the regulations on Medicare to step up the cost by about half a billion dollars to sick seniors. He has announced that he would veto pending bills dealing with such various matters as "flood control and rural electrification . . . airport security and veterans' burial benefits." And if the veto is overridden, declared domestic affairs adviser John Ehrlichman, the President will simply impound the funds. The Nixonian assault is not on a few aberrations of the Johnsonian effort but on as much of the New Deal accomplishments as it dares assail.

One popular rationale for this turnabout is simply that Uncle Sam cannot afford these past luxuries. Explaining Nixon's pre-announced veto of pending legislation, John Ehrlichman warned that these proposals represented a "$9 billion dagger aimed at the heart of the American taxpayer."

Can the U.S. Treasury—in this post-Vietnam era—afford this $9 billion? Testifying before Congress, economist Joseph Pechman of the Brookings Institution put it on the record that "if income was more fully taxable and the unnecessary deductions were removed, it would be possible both to reduce taxes and to buy more of the public services that the recent budget suggests we cannot afford." Stanley Surrey points out that while this administration pleads poverty, it gives away between $50-$60 billion a year in the form of tax exemptions to the rich, a sum that exceeds all other government subsidy, grant, or credit programs and is, in addition, "immune from scrutiny at any time when the regular budget is being carefully scrutinized for every possible savings."

However erroneous Ehrlichman's argument may be, it is popular: people don't want to pay more taxes and they have ready ears for an American Poujadiste. But for how long? In a recent column, John P. Roche offered a prediction: "I'm convinced that after the American people have lived a while with the Nixon Doctrine of 'the withering away of the state' they will begin to yearn for the good old days." Especially—may one add—when they discover that there are ways to get the rich to help pay the bill.

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George F. Will: My philosophy tutor at Oxford was fond of quoting to me the late J. L. Austin's remark that he did not want to make philosophy foolproof, he wanted to make it genius-proof. I was never an impediment to Austin's program, but I understood his point. Philosophic geniuses tend to clutter up the intellectual landscape with portentous, often intriguing, but usually unclear and confusing ideas. Philosophy should be analytic, a solvent, in the sense that it dissolves rather than solves most "philosophic" questions, whatever *they* might be. The imposing constructions of the most ingenious philosophers tend to evaporate under the scrutiny of reasonable men committed, first and foremost, to clearing up logical muddles. So the rule for genius-proofing philosophy is: do first things first—clarify—and you may find that first things are all you have to do. Of course, clarity is not the sort of philosophic goal that sends men to the barricades, and that is not its only merit. Its principal merit is that it deals competently with the manageable task it prudently sets for itself, the task of tidying up our thought. *And it does no harm.* Austin's conception of philosophy might seem unimaginative or timid but, in matters of the mind, there are many virtues on which unimaginativeness and timidity are improvements.

Not even my tutor's heroic efforts made me competent to judge whether Austin's axiom is really sound. But having just spent several years watching the federal government function, I feel competent to advocate a political version of the axiom. We should make government ingeniousness-proof, especially with regard to social policies, and most especially with regard to policies concerning poor people. We have tried ingenious anti-poverty measures, from manpower programs through Community Action, designed to change the nature of poor people. The theory was that if the government gave poor people marketable talents and a feisty, demanding demeanor, they would be able to cope with American life. The government undoubtedly did some good. But the government is better, much better at delivering material goods to particular places—moon rockets, even the mail—than at delivering particular skills and character traits to a segment of the population. So instead of tinkering with their temperaments, the government should content itself with directly improving the economic condition of poor people. The problem with that condition is too little money. So the government should quit decreasing the purchasing power of the money poor people have, and if that does not help enough, it should give them more money. But first things first: the government would improve its performance if it would quit harming the poor, economically.

IF AMERICA'S poor people were politically organized—or even organizable—and sophisticated and adept, they would be a very odd kind of poor people, and they could compete as just another interest group in the normal scramble for government favors. If poor people were malleable, adjustable, and able easily to acquire marketable new skills, most would not be poor. So if we begin with more realistic expectations for the

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poor, we will devise less ingenious ways of helping them. And we may actually help them. Certainly we will help them more if we think about them—explicitly about them—less. Some people believe the efficient way to fight poverty is to load "poverty money" into the federal budget. But the effective force in generating such money virtually guarantees that the money will not be an efficient force against poverty. (The bureaucracy gets Congress to appropriate an average of $8,000 for every Oglala Sioux family at Wounded Knee. The average Oglala family income is $1,900 per year.) The best way to help the poor is by provoking the non-poor majority into making some self-interested demands that also help poor people. This will be a very limited war on poverty, waged by indirection and, if not in defiance of public hostility to such a war, at least without asking or receiving explicit support. It will be like Vietnam: an untidy, inconclusive, little war, but the only war possible, given the political mood of the nation.

Politically, "poverty programs"—designed and advertised as "for the poor"—are not popular. Such programs are generally believed to have failed in the 60's. Given this belief, it is instructive to note that the 60's saw some of the most significant domestic reform in the nation's history.

The most important social policies of that decade were not service programs, and did not fail. They addressed facets of *the* permanent great problem of our nation, and they were stunning successes. One decade ago, in April 1963, "Bull" Connor was a household word: the Birmingham demonstrations were under way. With a little help from Connor, public opinion moved further, faster, in a humane direction than anyone could have anticipated. This was primarily the work of a politically skillful civil-rights movement that identified salient issues, devised clear legislative goals and strategies, and built a constituency and a consensus nationally, thereby enabling the politicians to perform creditably. The leading poverty fighters never did this, in part because they were not related to "their problem" the way the civil-rights leaders were: civil-rights leaders were fighting for *their own* rights. Historians will record that the most significant legislative landmarks of the decade concerned the distribution of rights, not wealth. They concerned access to voting booths, jobs, barbershops, the Pickrick restaurant. And they were noble achievements. The tendency to ignore them when considering social policy in the 60's reflects only the pernicious habit of defining institutions and policies by the goals they fail to achieve.

The "failure" of poverty programs is what really interests people, and that is interesting. Such an assessment of poverty programs often involves dubious criteria of failure, and distinctively American social impatience. A significantly smaller percentage of our population lives in poverty today than a decade ago. It is hard (but, in my judgment, not crucial) to know precisely how much credit for this goes to poverty programs. In any case, this improved percentage is *not* evidence of failure of those programs—unless, of course, one assumes the programs were irrelevant to the improvement; or that the improvement came in spite of a negative net effect of the programs; or that they "failed" because some poverty remains. These are unreasonable assumptions. Reasonable people disagree as to whether poverty programs failed. *But today the salient fact is political: most Americans are not much interested in poverty, and not at all interested in poverty programs. The next phase of the attack on poverty must begin by accepting that fact.*

To avoid a distracting argument, let us assume the poverty programs "worked," at least a bit. As Milton Friedman has said of a controlled economy: it works, and so does a horse and buggy. The 1960's poverty programs were the horse-and-buggy approach to improving the lot of poor people. Because some programs seemed cleverly inventive, they had a certain fascination for many Americans. From Robert Fulton and Eli Whitney through Samuel Colt, Cyrus McCormick, Thomas Edison, and Henry Ford, the nation has profited from a series of brilliant strokes of practical intelligence that improved the conditions of living. The spirit of modernity—intelligence is practical; man can cope; problems are tractable, being rooted in past behavior rather than permanent human attributes—that stimulated such inventiveness seemed vindicated by it. True, today some people are obsessed by the utterly unsurprising fact that revolutionary inventions often have disagreeable unanticipated consequences: Whitney's made slavery pay, Ford's democratized a polluting activity. But more significant than today's fashionable resentment of the men who invented our conveniences is the fact that our nation reveres its inventors above all philosophers and most politicians. So it is not surprising in a politicized age that Americans' social genes make them impatient for benevolent *government* inventiveness. Perhaps they are encouraged to expect an Edison-like genius from public officials because the Manhattan Project, the Apollo moon program, and the interstate highway program—all dealing in hard goods, and backed by powerful interests—have been the most successful government programs of modern times: they did what they were supposed to do. But no program, least of all a "service" program explicitly "for" poor people, will deal in the kind of things, or be backed by the kind of interests, that enables the government to perform skillfully. And that is why the so-called "human resources" portion of the budget (by far the largest portion, 47 per cent, compared with 30 per cent for defense) is not the place to look for evidence that

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the government has a serious "program" for helping poor people.

Of course many conspicuous defenders of the poor argue—many sincerely, some cynically—that the quantity of "poverty money" in the federal budget is the most important fact about the relation of poor people to their government. That mistaken notion accounts for some of the overwrought reaction to the President's Fiscal Year 1974 budget. The reaction casts doubt on the sobriety of some people who want to command divisions in the next declared war on poverty. The asperity with which they have attacked the new budget suggests the lengths to which they will go to confirm their belief that the President would rather grind the faces of the poor than watch the Superbowl.

In fact, the budget calls for a $13 billion deficit. The President proposes to spend $268.7 billion this year, double what Lyndon Johnson spent in 1966 while escalating wars against poverty and North Vietnam. The President proposes to spend $19 billion (7.5 per cent) more than last year and $22 billion (9 per cent) more than he originally proposed to spend. (This year's *increase* is larger than the *sum* of all the federal budgets from 1789 through 1906.) Last year's outlays by government at all levels came to nearly 40 per cent of the national income. The increase in outlays in the last five years is equal to 46 per cent of the increase in national income, and if you delete defensive outlays the figure is 45 per cent. As has been said, we are lucky we do not get all the government we pay for.

SOME of the programs that people defend against the President's cuts (e.g., cheap loans for non-poor agriculture interests) are like Pascal's hare that one would chase all day but would not bother to buy. These people are applying to the federal government the rule Hitler applied to the Wehrmacht in Russia: where it sets its foot, it shall never withdraw. These people (like Hitler, but with less reason) believe that retrenchment will become pell-mell retreat. Also, because there was a time when it was hard to get money for social programs, some people cannot believe that today's government is awash with systemic pressures for more spending, particularly for existing programs, and especially for programs that are not working (because, their patrons say, they are "insufficiently funded"). Such dogmatic resistance to (non-defense) budget cuts calls to mind a proverb: "When he was young he burned his tongue on the soup, so now he blows on the yogurt." The federal budget runneth over. Federal spending is increasing faster than economic growth is increasing revenues through the tax system, and virtually the only existing consensus (remember *that* word from the Great Society salad days?) is that there should be no tax increase.

But for the poor, the budget is not the point. The budget, like the rest of government, is a playground for those who are physically fit, politically. It usually takes organization, leadership, money, and a leavening dash of political moxie to place an item in the budget. Thus one can almost assume that any item for the poor is not just for them, and perhaps not primarily for them. Much of the demand for day-care facilities, and virtually all the effective demand, is from middle-class mothers who look upon the program as a monument to their "right" to have a career outside the home. For the Family Assistance Plan, the President requested, and Congress refused, extra billions for poor people. Jerry Wurf, whose State, County, and Municipal Employees Union includes 30,000 welfare workers, opposed FAP: "This legislation threatens to eliminate the jobs of our people." Daniel P. Moynihan, FAP's father, notes with a trace of wonder that the poor "never showed any sign of comprehending the opportunity being offered them, nor of resenting those who in their name rejected this offer." But what is less surprising than the fact that people who cannot cope with the economic system have not mastered the complexities of the political process?

When President Johnson submitted his Fiscal Year 1969 budget he said $27.7 billion was for all "assistance to help reduce the number of people living on poverty." Probably a similarly derived figure today would be higher—and just as useless—for measuring the federal government's effect on poor people. The real effect comes from the myriad measures that influence the size, shape, and vigor of the economy. Many of these measures do not show up in the budget, and of those that do, few are labeled as what they are—subsidies. But they all are part of the evolving American political economy that now deserves to be known as a "subsidy system." The working of this system is neither arcane nor secret. It is all very public business, aboveboard and on the record, open to the inspection of everyone who heeds Yogi Berra's epistemological principle: "You can observe a lot by just watching."

FOR the purpose of understanding this system it is useful to define a subsidy as direct or indirect government assistance (sometimes but not always monetary) to a private interest to improve the lot of that interest. A subsidy system exists when government adopts a comprehensive (although perhaps unsystematic) use of subsidies to influence the amount and distribution of wealth throughout society. Our subsidy system recently received some attention when the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, chaired by Senator William Proxmire (D., Wis.), claimed that subsidies involved $63 billion in Fiscal Year 1970. As Senator Proxmire says, subsidies are "one of the most controversial, . . . and neglected areas of government activity . . . [and] are the dominant

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form of government intervention into the incentive structure of particular private markets."

One reason the subject of subsidies is neglected is that the word "subsidy" does not make many official appearances. Subsidizing usually is done by things called regulations, guidelines, aid, reimbursements, incentives, tax credits, loan guarantees.

Direct intervention in the market, as with agricultural products, is a subsidy.

Regulations that set railroad freight rates are subsidies, as are limitations on truck routes that restrict competition.

Tariffs, import quotas, and export assistances are subsidies.

Licensing and apprenticeship requirements that have the intended effect of restricting entry into a profession are subsidies.

Payments of public funds to induce the production of goods (e.g., Ph.D.'s and museums) or delivery of services (e.g., airline service to small communities) that would not otherwise be produced or delivered are subsidies.

The humanitarian rhetoric used by AFL-CIO lobbyists last year in the effort to increase the minimum wage could not obscure the fact that minimum-wage laws are indirect subsidies for organized labor, which enhance its general negotiating position by forcing up the base wage. The fact that every increase in the minimum wage generates unemployment among the most vulnerable workers—usually young, often black, in marginal jobs—underscores the fact that subsidies usually work for the strong at the expense of the weak. The fact that the giant McDonald's hamburger chain was not motivated by altruism last year does not alter the fact that, by opposing the minimum-wage increase, it was acting in the interests of a lot of poor black teen-agers.

Subsidies are everywhere, and much of the political activity today at the federal level concerns their allocation. Each element of this interlocking, overlapping quilt of disparate government measures, like most things in a modern state, has its own momentum, nurtured by the attentive special interest it serves. Like Socrates's death, the subsidy system injures incrementally, and injures the poor most of all. Fortunately, it does not injure only the poor. Its inevitable product is inflation, which is a very democratic aggravation: it affects everybody. That is what gives poor people reason for hope.

The subsidy system's politicized cost of living injures poor, disorganized, inarticulate people but it *angers* non-poor, articulate people, and anger is politically more important than mere injury. So the most direct and obvious way to help poor people, at least a little bit, is to get non-poor people angry about the subsidy system that produces the inflation that most severely injures people with little discretionary income. Non-poor people vote regularly and can be made to complain loudly. They must be made to notice the costs of unnoticed government measures.

We have come a long way from the day Alexander von Humboldt described the U.S. government to the King of Prussia as "a government which no one sees or feels, yet is far more powerful than Your Majesty's government." Today the unfortunate thing is that too many potentially obstreperous people do not know when they are seeing or feeling their government. There are some encouraging signs. More and more people are cottoning on to the fact that they are seeing their government's agriculture programs in high food prices and feeling their government's import quotas when fuel oil is scarce. It would be grand if this were the beginning of a lot of boisterous resentment on the part of middle-class consumers. If it is, it will not be the first time resentment fueled benevolent social change. Today, with the federal budget under severe pressure and the public out of patience with poverty programs, many measures that will help poor people also will benefit the non-poor but very irritable majority.

The subsidy system was built by intense interests exploiting the fact that most people have better things to do than monitor the details of government. Cattlemen are attentive to meat imports. Hamburger eaters are not, at least not yet. But the widespread agitation about inflation in general and food prices in particular has caused the administration's tentative retreat from some farm subsidies. That retreat is a victory for poor people.

There probably will not be a substantial dismantling of the subsidy system. And maybe there should not be: a subsidy, like free trade, is an expedient, not a principle. Some subsidies *are* useful. The sudden withdrawal of others would cause unjust and insupportable injury to interests that have come to depend on them. In any case, there is scant evidence that a generalized resentment, generated by particular instances of subsidized inflation, will soon become a demand for a substantially less politicized economy. Certainly as long as the ideology and bureaucracy of wage-and-price controls function as they now do we will continue our resolutely downhill trudge toward a comprehensively controlled economy in which the big economic battalions bake and cut the pie.

If that is where we are going, the distribution of income in the U.S. will continue to be unfair, not so much because of inequities inherent in any particular disparities of income, but because the rewards of life in America are so significantly influenced by government measures that would be fairer if they were as capricious as they may appear to the casual observer. And so, because any dismantling of the subsidy system is apt to be very partial, the kind of aid to the poor, valuable

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though it is, should be supplemented by—a subsidy. Because our subsidy system probably cannot be made to wither away, people need *and are owed* something like FAP, some form of income support—which, by the way, is a crackerjack example of anti-ingeniousness in social policy: if people are poorer than you think they should be, give them cash.

Poor people should—but probably will not—have many conservative allies in promoting income support. To understand why many conservatives will not be allies, consider Howard Phillips, the enthusiast unleashed upon the Office of Economic Opportunity. Mr. Phillips plunged into his demolition duties with a zest derived from a tiresomely familiar conservative doctrine: poverty is an economic problem, not a "political" problem. That is absurd. Poverty is a political problem and a governmental responsibility *because* it is an economic problem. Conservatives should understand this better than most people. Conservatives cherish the paradigm of a limited government holding the ring for a fluid, competitive, unregulated market that metes out justice. They understand the extent to which we have departed from that. But too many do not seem to understand the moral imperatives that devolve from that departure. Indeed, the current debate-*cum*-autopsy about Great Society poverty programs is bewildering because those who oppose treating poverty as a "political" problem derive their indictments of liberal programs—most of which are indictable—from a social doctrine that is refuted by the most obvious facts of American political and economic life. Today the government is a significant, pervasive factor determining the rewards of life in America, and the government did not become so last Tuesday. If conservatism is going to help make things more fair, it must consist of more than a tissue of inclement truths about the futility of government. It must take seriously the political economy that has evolved in the atmosphere (fostered by liberalism) of casual government intervention in economic affairs, a political economy that conservatives cannot realistically hope to dismantle.

We are stuck with a very political economy for as far into the future as any sensible person would claim to see. The public sector is too much with us. As a result, much of the private sector, including the economic condition of poor people, is not a "private" matter any more; it is permeated with the public interest. Regarding the poor, politicians should swear an oath—"I will do no harm"—and seek a social strategy based on fewer harmful subsidies for the strong and one subsidy—income support—for the poor. Such a strategy will not involve new, electrifying, ingenious programs, but at least it will not violate the rule that there should be a government way where there is a government will. Such a strategy may seem unimaginative, even timid, but in government, as in matters of the mind, there are many virtues on which unimaginativeness and timidity are improvements.

George F. Will, *who has contributed to the Washington* Post *and the* National Review, *was for several years an aide to former Senator Gordon Allott (R.) of Colorado.*

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The Curious Analyzer

John P. Sisk

We remember only too well the macabre irony with which in the graveyard scene Hamlet contemplates Yorick's skull; how for him it mocks the vaunt and leap of life, whether manifested in the court jester, the beautiful woman ("let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come"), or the mightiest of rulers. Horatio's observations, being those of a straight man, are unfortunately less memorable. When Hamlet asks him, "Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till 'a finds it stopping a bunghole?," Horatio replies with his quieter irony, " 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so." He is suggesting that his friend's analysis is over-ingenious, but he might also have suggested that it is rather old-fashioned. As Johann Huizinga helps us to see in his *Waning of the Middle Ages,* Hamlet's curious reduction of life to those grosser physical aspects of death that appear to invalidate it was supported by literary and social conventions over two hundred years old.

No matter. Hamlet never sounds more like our brother than when he is curiously considering: delving beneath the fair outer appearance of reality to discover the "things rank and gross of nature" that are the constituent truth about it. In him we find united the modern psychoanalyst and the modern intellectual, both of whom, says Philip Rieff in *The Triumph of the Therapeutic,* "have the analytic method as the very basis and limit of their vocations" and as an integrating factor in a negative community from the vantage point of which all positive communities "appear either fraudulent or stupid." "Our" Hamlet is an instinctive demythologizer and iconoclast, a man suffering from epistemological shock who has become a relentless enemy of awe. But there is a heroic quality in the curious analyzing that follows from the shock. Like Melville's Ahab, he is not afraid to strike through the mask of phenomenal life or dive deep below its bland surface; like Byron's Manfred (or like Nietzsche or Sade, for that matter), he dares to think unthinkable thoughts because they are the only true thoughts; like Freud, he can stare the Medusa in the face. Because he is not taken in by the fictions that pass for reality, he can analyze the fraudulently healthy man to discover the real truth about him, which is the "hidden impostume" that will kill him.

This Hamlet thrives in an atmosphere of exposé and scandal. Like a familiar kind of literary intellectual, he belongs with an elite of inside-dopesters that has special access not only to the rottenness of Denmark but to everything under the sun. He like that literary intellectual is discontented not so much *in* as *with* civilization, the enemy that threatens his autonomy by attempting to co-opt him for comfortable establishment roles. What promises to comfort him by supplying social, aesthetic, philosophic, or religious comfort is automatically suspect, for authentic autonomous experience is uncomfortable. And Hamlet the literary intellectual expresses his alienated disgust with irony (his heroic armor) as he reports on his curious considerations. He can make authentic poetry out of "this brave o'erhanging firmament" whose majestical roof is "fretted with golden fire" only if it is juxtaposed with the "foul and pestilential congregation of vapors" that give the lie to it. Because he has lost all his mirth (only the deceived can be truly mirthful) his humor tends to be black or sick. Like Lenny Bruce and his epigones, he seems compelled to degrade, demean, belittle, and debunk whatever threatens to keep his world in awe lest he lose his grip on a position of ascetic purity.

Since he is a puritan in a wasteland, our Hamlet suffers from sex nausea. He knows that "the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into its own likeness." In his version of the *contemptus mundi* there is no better objective correlative for the disgust with civilization than the sexually irresistible but thoroughly corrupt woman. To see through her harlot's cheek to the Medusa face behind it, but without the buffering of Perseus's mirror-shield, is to display the kind of unflinching courage in the face of the appalling that we are expected to recognize in Céline, Artaud, Burroughs, Beckett, Albee, and Tennessee Williams.

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It is a great convenience to us that our Hamlet is so close to madness. We know very well why Claudius believes that "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go." Hamlet's "turbulent and dangerous lunacy" threatens to subject the real lunacy of Claudius's establishment to a destructive analysis. Hamlet, in fact, makes a compelling prince in our romance of insanity, which, according to Lionel Trilling ("Authenticity and the Modern Unconscious," COMMENTARY, September 1971), is grounded on two assumptions: that "insanity is a direct and appropriate response to the coercive inauthenticity of society" and that "insanity is a negation of limiting conditions in general, a form of personal existence in which power is assured by self-sufficiency." Our Hamlet is mad, or on the dangerous edge of madness, for the same reason that some of our most compelling poets have been: as a means of validating his visionary insights. W. H. Auden has recently expressed a preference for a poetry "firmly rooted in staid common sense." One may assume that in it authentic personhood and commitment are not represented as hopelessly incompatible, and that it is neither obsessively analytical nor obsessively against awe. Our Hamlet would immediately recognize it as inauthentic.

I am using "our" Hamlet here as a means of approaching the curious analyzer in rather negative terms. Insofar as they are the right terms for him, his life is one of unremitting process, an endless discovery of illusion, an endless demythologization and iconoclasm as the seductive fictions play over the face of time. At his most extreme he will be a Prometheus bound by his own wish beyond all hope of unbinding, a hero of discomfort committed only to self-transcendence through suffering. Then the dangers are that he will become vulnerable to counter-analysis by deriving comfort from the myth of himself as a relentless demythologizer, or by failing to see the extent to which he may have been overdetermined by, even made the creature of, the icons he is set on smashing. His dilemma is that heroes are always prisoners of their story-communities and limited by the interdependence of themselves and their antagonists: what is Prometheus without the tyrant Zeus, to say nothing of the vulture that so accommodatingly and indefatigably feeds on his liver? Besides, it is the fate of the hero to inspire emulation and adulation, from which follow (it is the irony of what Trilling has called the adversary culture) the comforts of community and commitment.

Prometheus may want the authenticity of a Continual Refusal but it is likely that some higher need will use him in the interests of a Permanent Revolution. Thus Shelley releases him from his rock so that the Golden Age can begin. One might imagine that in this new and final order the loneliest man would be Prometheus, since he would no longer be permitted the authenticity of counterrevolution. Our Hamlet is in a similar lonely situation. Insofar as he is the prince of rejectors in a negative community, the play itself ought to be a disaster; but by being aesthetically successful, by demonstrating once more the possibility of a meaningful synthesis against near overwhelming odds, it brings comfort and so leaves him stranded. If our Hamlet were entirely successful in his curious considerations, he would destroy our faith in his creator. The Hamlet of most 20th-century criticism is subordinated to the action or theme of the play, which is an aesthetic community; our Hamlet wants to reverse the order and in effect, by subordinating it to his own needs, to get entirely out of the play.

FORTUNATELY, however, these negative terms are not the only ones available to the curious analyzer. There is a position of faith according to which analysis may be utterly relentless and yet ordered to comfort. To act as if the discovery of illusion were an end in itself—as if it had no story, no beginning, middle, and end—is to act heretically according to this true faith. To the extent that Prometheus is viewed as chained defiantly to the rock, he dramatizes the aspiration to the self-sufficiency of godhead. But according to the true faith, his proper destiny is to serve the needs of a community of the liberated in which perhaps everyone is a god. Actions motivated by the true faith may appear to be analytically sterile, perverse, or subversive with respect to established cultural values, but if seen with respect to their own teleology they are creative, integrative, and salvational. An old-fashioned radical like Trotsky could believe that the struggle against foul language "is an essential condition of mental hygiene, just as the fight against filth and vermin is a condition of physical hygiene." But for Herbert Marcuse (see *An Essay on Liberation*) the obscenities of the new radicals are "the elemental act of giving a new name to men and things" and fall in line "with the great design of the desublimation of culture, which, to the radicals, is a vital aspect of liberation."

To us living at the end of the 20th century, Marcuse's reference is to a very old liberation dream. It envisages the creative and vital termination of curious analysis prior to which all fearful depths will have been plumbed, all frauds will have been discovered, all false consciousness corrected, all garbage carted away and burned up. Bertrand Russell puts it this way (Noam Chomsky is quoting him at the end of his 1971 Russell Lectures):

> Meanwhile, the world in which we exist has other aims. But it will pass away, burned up in the fire of its own hot passions; and from its ashes will spring a new and younger world, full of fresh hope, with the light of morning in its eyes.

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This is in the spirit of Shelley at the end of Act III of *Prometheus Unbound*:

> *The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains*
> *Scepterless, free, uncircumscribed, but man*
> *Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,*
> *Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king*
> *Over himself; just, gentle, wise. . . .*

Or of Marcuse himself at the end of *An Essay on Liberation*:

> . . . it [the condition of social redistribution and liberation] would mean the ascent of the Aesthetic Principle as Form of the Reality Principle: a culture of receptivity. . . . Not regression to a previous stage of civilization, but return to an imaginary *temps perdu* in the real life of mankind. . . .

So through analysis, sustained by a faith in the ultimate direction of the process and implemented by what Max Weber calls an ethic of intention, we have arrived at a position beyond analysis, beyond fiction, beyond interpretation, beyond myth. There are no more hidden impostumes for Hamlet's curious considerations, no more masks for Ahab to strike through, no more vultures to feed on Prometheus's liver, no more Medusas to stare down. We have bottomed out on solid ground at last. Or to put it in the terms of Wilhelm Reich, father of the sexual revolution and most curious of analyzers, we have left the cultural periphery, passed through the horrors of the middle layer, and arrived at the core where the true blue orgonic cosmic energy streams free. The next and inevitable move is the joyful one Shulamith Firestone sketches in *The Dialectic of Sex*: for the first time to create society "from the bottom up" and "to reestablish the earthly Garden of Eden." In this scheme of things even those who, like Freud, can see no end to discontent, or who, like our Hamlet, continue to defy and resist on their own egotistic terms, can have their uses: they have at least identified the enemy. You can be on the side of the angels without knowing it, as Blake believed that Milton was, though to him this meant that Milton was of the devil's party.

It is the expectation of bottoming out at last that has sustained science in its curious analyses of the peripheral world of commonsense appearance. In the interest of its own morale, science has had to believe that no matter what Medusas it confronted, or what labyrinths it explored, or what monster forces it encountered at what depths beneath the comfortable fictions of daylight life, in the end all analytic operations would prove to have been on the right track, as if guided by a hidden hand. This is why C. P. Snow was able to maintain that scientists, unlike literary intellectuals, had remained on the whole happy analyzers, little troubled with the sense of themselves as members of an adversary culture. They have had the true faith, as Einstein had it when, unhappy with the implications of statistical probabilities, he observed that "God does not throw dice." Therefore they were in a better position to tolerate paradoxes and discontinuities, to say nothing of the increasingly disturbing political, social, philosophical, and religious consequences of their analyzing.

Despite the well-publicized rift between the two cultures, it is no doubt ultimately impossible to separate the scientist's from the literary intellectual's or socialist's dream of bottoming out at last providing one has the courage to endure the incidental discomforts and horrors. But long ago now the literary intellectual tried to establish his faith on a different kind of bottom to be groped for by different means. However, he remained a truth-seeker at least as much as a maker. But in the very nature of things he was much more likely than the scientist or the socialist (who had the advantage of thinking of himself as a scientific analyzer) to be demoralized by the consequences of his own or anyone else's curious considerations, by his Yeatsian apprehensions that the center might not hold and that anarchy might be loosed on the world.

But if it has become increasingly hard for the literary illusion-detector to keep the faith, he has remained firmly attached to the dogma that the opposition to comfort and awe is fundamentally right and that the intrepid plunge into the depths, even if it means courting sinister powers, is the true way to liberation and self-transcendence. One sometimes gets the impression (in Burroughs or in Mailer at his most violent, for instance) that what is at work is a conviction that the dogma will revive the faith if the dogma is pressed hard enough. Hence our tendency to judge writers as if they were old-fashioned heroes: putting more emphasis on courage than on craft. Indeed, it is hard for us to get rid of the suspicion that there is the same irreconcilable conflict between craft and authentic experience that there is between culture and reality, with the implication that if one expects to bottom out on the ultimately real he must be prepared to let craft and culture go. In this view the proper end of poetry is the end of poetry.

There have always been writers to whom this familiar dogma has been unacceptable, or who, like Mann and Conrad, have at least been of two minds about it. But adversary voices are especially interesting now after a decade during which so much encouragement was given to the romantic faith in bottoming out and the heretical faith in self-transcendence through discomfort. Thus A. Alvarez in his study of suicide, *The Savage God*, questions the therapeutic theory of art, whereby the artist relieves himself of his fantasies by expressing them, and suggests that the knowledge from the depths that results from the application of this theory "may change him irredeemably so that he becomes that image." W. H. Auden,

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commenting on this passage in his review of the book, observes: "The moral, surely, is that one should be very cautious in what one chooses to write about." Joyce Carol Oates, in her review of the book, wonders whether the Aristotelian idea of the cathartic function of art might be mistaken and questions "our entire culture, which exhibits so proudly and, indeed, so lavishly, public images of violence, death, and comic horror in such billion dollar industries as the movies." Alvarez himself, speaking of Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and John Berryman's last poems, has confessed to similar reservations about what he once extolled as virtues in extremist poetry, "in which the artists deliberately push their perceptions to the very edge of the tolerable." The gains, he now believes, are not worth the terrible cost. To judge from the conversations recorded in *Reich Speaks of Freud,* even Reich had come to realize that the return to orgonic nature, to the core, "may be decades, may be centuries away" since if the corrupting armor of culture were removed "there would be chaos. Perfect chaos! Murder everywhere!"

This concern with the disproportion between gains and losses was a familiar one during the 60's as various critics reacted to anti- and counter-cultural extravagances—for instance, John Passmore, Daniel Bell, Saul Bellow, Seymour Martin Lipset, Robert Nisbet, Alfred Kazin, Lionel Trilling, Samuel McCracken, David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, Hannah Arendt, Conor Cruise O'Brien, James Cameron, and (though many of his most ardent admirers are likely to forget this) the late Paul Goodman. There are important differences of cultural commitment and critical stance among these writers, but it might be said that they have expressed a skepticism about the unqualified goodness of the analytical temper, however analytical they have had to be in their opposition to it, and a common concern with the preservation of culture. This means that they are in contention with a formidable piety: that all that is good or valid or personally authenticating comes from beyond or below culture. From the point of view of this piety Auden's moral that one should be very cautious in choosing his subjects is no less cravenly reactionary than C. S. Lewis's earlier moral: "To know how bad we are, in the mere condition of nature, is an excellent recipe for becoming much worse."

Both morals assume that there may be doors best not opened (it is too likely that behind them are destructive horrors) and depths best not plumbed (it is too likely that they have no bottoms or, worse, that their suspected bottoms are false). Such a position suggests a traditional fear of *hubris*, though it may have a piety of its own to make it more than a fear that one will not survive. But whether we are pious or merely prudent, we are familiar enough with the fear that science may be opening doors best kept closed, plumbing depths best not visited, analyzing arrangements best kept as they are. Thus George Steiner, after surveying "a revolution that concerns us all" in contemporary science, observes that trends in the life sciences cast doubt on our "confident assumption that the needs of man, that the requirements of social justice and personal worth, would prove to be in more or less natural accord with the discoveries of science." It is the shaking of this faith that threatens to leave us standing in Bluebeard's castle, says Steiner. "For the first time, the forward-vaulting intelligence of our species, so intricate and yet so vulnerable a piece of systematic evolution, finds itself in front of doors it might be best to leave unopened."

However, Steiner's reservations about the analytic, door-opening temper of science are rather tentative and probing; he is by no means certain that the roof fretted with golden fire will turn out to be a pestilent congregation of vapors. But criticisms of this temper are likely to be much more categorical if they have an ecological and countercultural basis. For Theodore Roszak, for instance (see *Where the Wasteland Ends*), science with its single vision "has led us not to the promised land but to the technocratic trap we find closing about us." Science attempts to be a school of consciousness that rules out alternate realities; it rolls across the globe "like a mighty juggernaut obliterating every alternative life style"; it is guilty of complicity in the rape of the environment by profiteering industrialists, myopic developers, and a greedily consuming public. Science as Roszak views it, then, has not only put us in Bluebeard's castle but is committed compulsively to opening all the doors.

For Roszak, objective knowing is alienated knowing, and the prime place of objective knowing is the research laboratory. He expresses the revolt against objectivity about which Robert Nisbet wrote perceptively in his essay "Subjective Si! Objective No!" Nisbet was concerned with the agreement among an increasing number of social scientists that their proper business was not to understand society but to destroy it in order to remake it. The result, as he saw it, was an epistemological nihilism in which salvation was to come not from analysis but from action following from one or another position of faith. More than sixty years ago the American historian Carl L. Becker suggested the possibility of such a shift in his essay "Detachment and the Writing of History." The time might come, he wrote, when objective detachment would be felt to be less important than caring greatly what happens—a time in which objective man might not be particularly adapted to survive.

Four years before Becker published his essay, Henry Adams in his *Education* had put the conflict between objective detachment and caring greatly in the form of a dilemma: "The historian

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must not try to know what is truth, if he values his honesty; for, if he cares for his truths, he is certain to falsify his facts." No one ever had less faith in bottoming out or in self-transcendence through discomfort—or is so close to our Hamlet in his alienation and profound disillusion. Arthur Balfour's 1904 announcement on the part of British science that "the human race without exception had lived and died in a world of illusion until the last years of the century" seems to have settled the matter for him. Bluebeard's castle held no further terrors. Like Flaubert, all Adams could do with his disillusion—but it was no small thing; it was even a comfort—was to make great literature out of it.

ADAMS's dynamo and Roszak's technocratic trap have a lot in common. "As Nature developed her hidden energies, they tended to become destructive," wrote Adams. "Thought itself became tortured, suffering reluctantly, impatiently, painfully, the coercion of new method." Nevertheless, if you take your stand with Adams, Roszak's position is one of pure illusion. What saves Roszak and many anti-objectivists from Adams's dilemma is the conviction that if one's faith is firm enough those facts necessary to validate it will be forthcoming (after all, one doesn't have to move very far from Adams's position to see that his book is itself a factual way of escaping from the dilemma). At the same time, Roszak shares Steiner's apprehensions about the doors in Bluebeard's castle which curious analyzers may be tempted to open. But Roszak is inclined to avoid the predicament by abandoning the castle for another domain entirely, in which, along with the "most ecologically involved young people in our society," we will learn more about our proper place in nature from sources of primordial wisdom (American Indian lore, Zen, and Tantra) than from Western science.

This hope of salvation through primordial wisdom—whether non-rational, supra-rational, mystic, gnostic, hermetic, demonic, diabolic; whether available through ascetic discipline, chants, fasts, diets, orgies, orgonic energy accumulators, erotic abandon, drugs, rock music, communal living, or a fortunate conjunction of the stars—is itself exacerbated by the analytic temper. One of Roszak's strengths is his knowledge that the aweless life is dehumanizing; another is the fact that he plainly cares very much. And certainly the wisdom that is primordial is not to be put down because it is primordial. But have not recent events demonstrated that he is standing in another kind of castle in which, at the prompting of curious considerations, all too many doors have been opened which had best been kept closed, or at least guarded more closely? To judge from the accounts of Ed Sanders and others, the members of the Charles Manson "family," for instance, were ardent devotees of what they and many others took (and still take) to be primordial wisdom. They had fashioned for themselves an escape from the technocratic trap that in time came to involve plans for a grand Helter Skelter that would cure the evils of Western civilization by ending it.

Manson himself (like the late rock stars Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and Jim Morrison) comes on as an intrepid opener of doors—though it might be more accurate to say that he blunders through doorways inadvertently or carelessly left open by others. He seems to have been a proper Reichian orgastic man through whom the orgonic energy streamed unimpeded by character armoring: according to Sanders's evidence, he experienced three to seven orgasms a day over a considerable period of time. He even had a Reichian interest in infant consciousness as the beginning point for a spontaneous life beyond the imprisoning nuclear family and beyond culture. He believed that total paranoia was total awareness. He had the true faith in bottoming out at last; indeed, he seems to have known where the bottom was: below that hole in the Hopi desert, to which he and his family, a saving remnant, would have access to eternal safety by means of a golden rope.

Manson of course does not invalidate Roszak. But by pushing the preoccupations of the adversary- and counter-cultures to extreme positions, Manson (like Sade before him) helps to expose them to the kind of critical analysis they might not otherwise get. He makes it easier to see the fascist potential that is in one segment of the counter-culture—and makes one remember uneasily how important primordial wisdom was to Nazism, that other famous attempt to escape from the dilemmas of the analytic temper.

Nazi Man as totally committed man has helped to teach the post-World War II world the dangers of commitment; no doubt he is an important factor among those forces that have produced Rieff's Therapeutic Man who aspires to a mode of existence beyond the limitations of doctrine, integrating point of view, character-set, or cultural configuration. He holds out the possibility of surviving with comfort and experiential variety in a world the curious analyzer has made all too uncomfortable. Bluebeard's castle holds no more threats for them than an amusement-park spook house—apart, that is, from the threat of personal extinction—for what is revealed behind the doors can threaten only committed people. Nor would they be likely candidates for Manson's family. Not unless they are posited on false assumptions about the human need for commitment and awe, in which case it might be all too easy to persuade them to enter into the spirit of Helter Skelter and go down the golden rope.

Speaking of his Therapeutic Man, Rieff observes, "But the mind boggles at a culture made up mainly of virtuosi of the self"—just as, one suspects, Flaubert's mind boggled at the prospect

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of a culture made up of people modeled on the Frédéric Moreau of his *Sentimental Education.* Certainly B. F. Skinner takes no comfort from such a prospect. For him the adversary- and counter-cultures are the plights visited on us because of our worship of the idols of freedom and dignity. However he may be pictured as a man plagued by his own Hamlet-like moments, even as a poet manqué, his book is a curious analyzer's offer of salvation from the discomforts of curious analysis. Skinner settles the issue of Bluebeard's castle by positing a Skinner Man to whom it would never occur to open doors meant to be kept closed. What he envisions, in fact, is a behaviorist version of what anthropologist Ruth Benedict has called a high-synergy culture, one characterized by a relative lack of friction between purely personal and communal needs. Skinner's strength is his sense of the inseparability of man from culture and his conviction that the dream of a post-cultural autonomous person is simply the consequence of one of the more sophisticated games that culture plays with us. But his own utopia by aiming to be an end-state aspires to be a culture beyond culture, beyond ideology, beyond the discovery of illusion (because its own illusion would be impervious to question), beyond myth (by being unaware of its own myth), and in effect bottomed out at last. Nor is Skinner immune from the effects of Manson's mad caricature of a high-synergy culture, for Manson too had employed an effective system of positive reinforcing contingencies (combined, it must be admitted, with a few negative ones) in order to secure a position beyond freedom and dignity. Is Manson trying to tell us, then, that Skinner is simply offering to lower us into another Hopi hole where we will forget the golden rope that let us down?

It is possible, of course, that our fears of the curious analyzer are in part the consequence of considerations themselves too curious, so that we are led to imagine a future in which no significant force opposes him as he continues ever more devastatingly to cut the ground away under our feet. But suppose we had the power to act on such fears. Is it not conceivable that the refusal to open doors would have the effect of opening a trap door beneath us? And what are our poets and novelists to discover if they do not discover illusion, whether in the expectation of bottoming out or as a self-aggrandizing experience, or simply as a consequence of the artist's critical involvement with his time and place? Who can imagine George Steiner, for instance, agreeing not to open any doors that confront *him?*

Skinner suggests one solution: we will stop our curious considerations when our culture finds a way to distract our attention to other matters—just as Hamlet (a Hamlet it may be convenient for us to forget) stopped his curious considerations when the action in which he was involved found a way to distract his attention back to his princely duty. All our curious considerations have a similar dramatic potential to result in the kind of mess in the attempt to correct which we rediscover, for better or worse, the exhilarations of community and commitment. Discomfort, as Steiner observes, is the spur of life—though the consequences of this law in history are as often chilling as cheering. If it gives us those who keep anarchy at bay and make the center hold, it also give us those passionate activists of the Right and Left, none of them "sicklied o'er" by Hamlet's "pale cast of thought," who demand that their motives be taken at their own evaluation, not reduced analytically to components they cannot manage without losing the fine edge of their fervor. So we are left to wonder whether the corollary to Steiner's law may not be that the dream of bottoming out is the spur of death.

In the meantime, and to speak practically, much that has not been able to survive the curious analyzer has not deserved to survive, and as a consequence much that is disposable has gone into the garbage bin of history. At this point there seems to be little reason to believe that the bin itself has a bottom: good news for garbage collectors but bad news for all who identify their discomfort with garbage. Animals have no garbage problem: so far as we can tell, they live contentedly beyond freedom and dignity and exempt from awe in a world of sensuous synthesis given to them by nature. Unaware of the qualification of information by time, they are beyond illusion and hence available to humans as symbols of a lost paradise in which nature and information were synonyms. But man becomes human at the point where he begins to question the given synthesis. What is crucial then, no doubt, is the context in which he analyzes and the degree of ironic restraint with which he resists the temptation to make analysis his idol.

The ascetic, in whom the analytic temper appeared long before it appeared in Hamlet, had to exercise this restraint lest he fall into heresy by identifying the given sensible universe, God's creation, as intrinsically illusionary and fraudulent, or into the sin of pride by glorying in his superiority to his deluded fellow men. The process of analysis for the ascetic who had the true faith was aimed at bottoming out on the ultimately real, just as it is for the modern analyzer who has the true faith, but the history of asceticism indicates that it has always been a process extremely difficult to control. Huizinga, to whose great book I would like to return, represents it as out of control in the decadent asceticism of the late Middle Ages, marked as the period was by its curious Hamlet-like considerations of the horrors of bodily decomposition in painting, poetry, sculpture, woodcuts, and sermons. In a passage applicable to our own analytic times, he refuses to see this preoccupation as truly pious:

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It would rather seem a kind of spasmodic reaction against an excessive sensuality. In exhibiting the horrors awaiting all human beauty, already lurking below the surface of corporeal charms, these preachers of contempt for the world express, indeed, a very materialistic sentiment, namely, that all beauty and all happiness are worthless because they are bound to end soon. Renunciation founded on disgust does not spring from Christian wisdom.

Nor does it spring from any genuine wisdom we know of, in whatever culture or creed, though disgusted renouncers are frequently enough heralded as wise. Rather, it is that sentimental imitation of wisdom that in an excessively analytical time is so likely to draw whatever comfort it can from the overload of information about its own corruption. Huizinga sees this as a failure of imagination. The late Middle Ages, he says, "relished these horrors without going one step further, to see how corruption perishes in its turn and flowers grow where it lay." In the view that goes this one step further, analysis results in a more viable synthesis and returns us to awe, with respect not to a vision that denies the given sensible universe but to one that shows it in a new and richer dimension. Then the fact that the dust of Alexander might be stopping a bunghole is worth considering, truly enough, but only in a context that is no longer very interesting.

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Zionism Revisited: Herzl

David Vital

It is appropriate to speak of the advent of Theodor Herzl. He was the hero of the Zionist movement—its only hero. So he was seen by its members and its adepts; and so he saw himself. He looked the hero. He acted the hero. He displayed the virtues and qualities that typically suggest the hero. For his followers—and for himself—he was Carlyle's "Ablest Man," the one who, if he is raised to the supreme place and loyally revered, provides the best government, the one who is the "truest-hearted, justest, Noblest Man," and whose instructions, because he is so, "must be precisely the wisest, fittest, that we could anywhere or anyhow learn." He had a hero's flaws—some so deep and plain to see that, on inspection, it becomes hard to understand the sources of his evident power for action and harder still to arrive at a just assessment of his role and contribution in and to the modern history of the Jews, let alone his qualities as a dispenser of political and social ideas. Yet it is no less plain that the contribution itself was an immense one. Zionism as a true political movement and as an international force —however small, however weak and uncertain—is to all intents and purposes his invention and his creation. He cut through the inconsistencies and dilemmas that overshadowed and largely paralyzed the social action of the Jews of Europe in a *Jewish* cause with a speed and thoroughness that is hard to credit. And before the full impact of the new divisions, inconsistencies, and dilemmas which he himself had implanted in the still largely amorphous body politic of Jewry could be registered, he died, suddenly, at the age of forty-four, after a mere eight or nine years of public life, leaving a stunned following, assured of his own posthumous glory while others coped with his legacy.

Herzl* was a child—and, indeed, a man—of the declining Austro-Hungarian Empire, a political structure that is exceptionally difficult to understand except in terms of its intricately connected component national parts. He was a largely assimilated, German-speaking, Hungarian Jew. He had three sets of forenames: the Hebrew Binyamin Ze'ev, the Magyar Tivadar, the German Theodor. He partook—unequally—of three cultures; and was in one way or another partly alien to all three. Technically, as it were, he was free to see himself, and to seek to make others see him, either as a Jew or as a Hungarian, or later as an Austrian, or again as a person to whom any two of the three ascriptions applied simultaneously. In reality, none applied to him without qualification. On his father's side there was only a single generation between him and the classic, unquestioning, observant Jewish community life of Eastern and Southeastern Europe.† But although he went to a Jewish school for some years in his childhood he was virtually without Hebrew or more than the most superficial and distant acquaintance with Jewish law and ritual, let alone the history, literature, and philosophy of the Jews, by the time he had reached manhood. Although born and bred in Budapest (in which his mother's family had long been resident), he belonged, by the accident of birth, to the limited class of Hungarian Jews who resisted the contemporary tide of Magyarization and retained a loyalty for the German language and a fondness, often bordering on romantic love, for much that was associated with German culture and what was then fancied best in, and specific to, the German people. "If there is one thing I should like to be," Herzl himself noted in his diary at his life's very turning-point, at the height of the period in which his essential ideas on the Jewish Question took shape, "it is a member of the old Prussian nobility." By vocation and by profession, moreover, he could accurately be described as a man of German letters. And by adoption and by choice he was, plainly, a notable Viennese: first as a university student, then (after a

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* The major source for the life and character of Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) is his diary, begun in May 1895, broken off in May 1904 less than two months before his death. The complete published version is the English: *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl,* edited by Raphael Patai, translated by Harry Zohn, 5 vols., A. S. Barnes, 1960. No complete and definitive edition of his other works, political speeches, and letters has ever been published, although most important items and many unimportant ones have appeared under various auspices and in several languages. The most recent collection of his writing, reasonably representative, is in Hebrew: *Kitvei Herzl,* 10 vols., Jerusalem, 1960-61 (actually, the last volume of the series is the standard biography by Alex Bein, published in English as *Theodor Herzl,* translated by Maurice Samuel, Jewish Publication Society, 1940; reissued by Atheneum in paper, 1970). The rest of the literature on Herzl is immense and of very uneven quality. The most important series is the *Herzl Year Book,* edited by Raphael Patai, 7 vols. to date, the Herzl Institute, 1958-71. But even there, scholarship and hagiography go side by side.

† Herzl's father, Ya'akov, was from Zemun (called Semlin by the Germans), near Belgrade. The *hacham* (rabbi) of Zemun was Yehuda Alkalai (1798-1878), whom it is customary to class with Kalischer as an original and independent, if only very moderately influential, "precursor" of Zionism. Herzl's grandfather was one of Alkalai's followers.

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brief interlude as a lawyer in the provinces) as a playwright, finally as a journalist of high repute. But never for a moment did Herzl actually fancy himself an authentic German—of the Austrian or of any other variety—and his faintly mawkish liking for the Germanic coexisted in his mind both with the belief that anti-Semitism had originated and had its center in Germany and with his profound and unchanging sense that his Jewish origin was a vital and irreducible element both of his inner makeup and of his social situation.

YET as a subject of the multinational, multi-lingual Austro-Hungarian Empire Herzl was not at all an alien or an outsider in the sense that Lilienblum or Pinsker were (even technically) alien subjects of the Russian Empire. In the preeminently plural society of Austria-Hungary it was possible for the Jews—once they had been granted legal emancipation—to play a role and to derive indirect political and social benefit from their being one category of subjects (among many others) which both the government and the various political groups that contended for power and influence within the state had to take into account. True, the issue was confused and the possibilities reduced by the fact that the closer individual Jews came to the center of the political arena, the more reluctant they were, as a rule, to act openly, or even covertly, on behalf of any defined Jewish interest. But on the non-Jewish side there was virtually no such blurring of the matter. Those who sought the Jews as allies, those who opposed them and sought to crush them, and those few who might be termed their friends all saw them as a major constituent of the social, economic, cultural, and, latterly, political fabric of the Empire.

Wickham Steed, one of the best informed and most acute of contemporary foreign observers (he was correspondent for the London *Times* in Berlin, Rome, and Vienna between 1896 and 1913), went so far as to state his belief that "among the peoples of Austria-Hungary the Jewish people stands first in importance. . . . Economically, politically, and in point of general influence they are . . . the most significant element in the Monarchy." But for a Jew to see his people in these terms and to say so publicly was to swim against the tide of vocal and dominant Jewish opinion, while putting himself in embarrassing rapport with non-Jewish opinion on a Jewish issue. For an assimilated Jew, which is to say, a Jew who had irreversibly and for all practical purposes adopted the language, culture, and social habits of the non-Jews, to do just this was exceedingly rare. It was particularly rare in Austria-Hungary because where German was both a national tongue and, as it were, the imperial *lingua franca,* adoption of the language, even the acquisition of literary proficiency in it, did not have the same implications for a switch of national identity—or its rejection—that the adoption of the native language and culture implied either in Germany proper, or in France or England.

IN FACT, a great variety of intermediate positions between totally turning one's back upon one's origins and total identification with a nationally-defined Jewry seemed possible. And alternatively, while it was unusual, it was not absurd, on the face of it, for a German- and Magyar-speaking, agnostic Jew to propound Jewish separateness without serious reference to, and in virtual ignorance of, the Jews' own language and literary and historical tradition. Indeed, an assimilated Western Jew who had concluded, for whatever reason, that the Emancipation had failed, or was to be rejected, or both, had little choice. He could not easily rejoin those of his people who still lived in the pre-emancipatory state—in Austrian Galicia, for example. He lacked the language, the lore, and, of course, the religious faith. To revert to the poverty and technological primitiveness characteristic of the Jews of the East was unthinkable. He could barely communicate with them. He found much in their aspect that repelled him. He could only return on condition that they met him halfway, so to speak—on the basis of a radical transformation of the Jewish condition in all respects, social as well as political. Even then, if he himself was not to remain an outsider within the body of his people, in mirror-image of his alien status among the non-Jews, he had to establish a tenable and sufficiently intimate relationship with those Jews who had remained within the orbit of their own specific culture—who were, in practice, those who had the most immediate cause to subscribe to a thoroughgoing reconstruction of Jewry.

Herzl's simple and spontaneous solution to the conundrum was to offer himself as their leader. The boldness of his vision—and its essential artlessness—can thus not be properly understood except in relation to the role he set for himself. And his impact on the course of Jewish history cannot be accounted for without overriding attention to Herzl the public figure and the man of action, rather than the ideologue, to Herzl the brilliant leader, Herzl the organizer of the Jewish national revival, Herzl "the King of the Jews." It was there that his distinction and originality lay, rather than in his ideas—which were clear enough, occasionally ingenious, entirely the product of his own mind, but marred by the superficiality of his analysis of the condition of the Jews, and by the naiveté of his program for action, and in no essential respect really new, even if Herzl himself was not at first aware of this.

THEODOR HERZL was an exceptionally impressive and good-looking man. "His natural, charming courtesy cast its spell upon me at that first moment," wrote Stefan Zweig of his initial meeting with Herzl when, as a youth of nineteen, he went to him, unannounced, to offer the eminent literary editor of the Vienna *Neue Freie Presse* his first short story for publication:

> The character of the courtesy was French, but his majestic appearance unquestionably gave it something of the dignity of kings

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or great diplomats. . . . He took [the story] from me, counted the pages of the manuscript, regarded the first page with great interest, leaned back in his chair. It was with a certain feeling of terror that I watched him begin to read in my presence. The minutes seemed to pass slowly; but this first view of his face, seen from one side, made a deep impression on me. It was a faultlessly handsome face. The soft, well-kept black beard gave it a clear, almost rectangular outline, into which the clean-cut nose, set exactly in the middle, fitted well, as did the high, slightly rounded forehead. But this beauty—perhaps almost too regular, too much like a work of art—was deepened by the gentle, almond-shaped eyes with their heavy, black, melancholy lashes—ancient Oriental eyes in this somewhat French face in the style of Alphonse Daudet, in this face which would have seemed slightly artificial or effeminate, or suggestive of the beau, had not the thousand-year-old melancholy of his soul shone through it.

It is clear that in his maturity at least Herzl was aware of the impression he made on others. It is more than probable that it contributed to, and underlay, the sense of mission and special destiny which gripped him in the thirty-fifth year of his life and sustained him in all that he did until his death at forty-four—and which was clearly the principal driving force within him. But there was much else in his circumstances and in his personal physical and mental equipment to bolster his sense of special destiny or, at the very least, to make it possible for him to play out the essentials of the role he set himself.

He was the single and beloved son of his parents; and the death of his only sister (when he was in his eighteenth year) and his own unsuccessful marriage bound parents and son together at a period in life when the usual tendency is for parents and children to grow apart. Their moral support and approval were unvarying to the end of his life. (Herzl's father died two years before his son, while his mother outlived him.) Without his father's generous financial support he would have been without the means to travel, to publish his newspaper, and to recruit the quasi-mercenary aid on which much of his political action in Constantinople depended. He himself had gifts of a fairly high order for social observation, and for clear, pungent, and witty exposition. He was a master of the literary style favored in the Vienna of his time: brilliant, in a rather brittle way, and studded with paradox and arresting metaphor. He had made a minor reputation for himself as a playwright and *feuilletoniste* before he was thirty and in 1891 was invited to serve as Paris correspondent of the most prestigious of all Viennese newspapers, the *Neue Freie Presse*. In 1895 a special post was created for him—that of literary or *feuilleton* editor—to enable him to return to Vienna. And despite the implacable opposition to his ideas with which the *Presse*'s two Jewish publishers and editors, Bacher and Benedikt, faced him at every turn thereafter, cajoling him, threatening him if he did not desist, consistently refusing to refer to his political activities even in their news columns (and all in the knowledge that it was his post on the newspaper that guaranteed Herzl's initial entrée into the political arena and that he was exploiting it to the limit of its possibilities), his talents and personal prestige as an editor and *littérateur* were such that his chiefs never ventured to fulfill the threat of dismissal and were satisfied to leave it dangling over him. Soon after his return to Vienna, the Prime Minister, Count Badeni, sought to provide him with a newspaper of his own if Herzl would undertake mild support of the government.

Herzl the intellectual was bright and sharp, rather than profound, and quick to abstract from life, rather than consider it in depth. "Let life itself be your source, and not your brain," he was advised by Ernst Hartmann, a popular actor of the day. "You are obviously gifted, you have talent, inventiveness, everything a playwright needs. But it seems to me that you ought to look more deeply into it." His first attempt (around 1893) at a root-and-branch solution to the Jewish Question "at least in Austria" was staggering in its combination of shallow thinking and high, even brilliant, fantasy, to say nothing of the central role he conceived for himself. He, Herzl, would go to the Pope and enlist his aid for a

> great movement for the free and honorable conversion of Jews to Christianity.
>
> Free and honorable by virtue of the fact that the leaders of this movement—myself in particular—would remain Jews and *as such* would propagate conversion to the faith of the majority. The conversion was to take place in broad daylight, Sundays at noon, in Saint Stephen's Cathedral, with festive processions and amid the pealing of bells. Not in shame, as individuals have converted up to now, but with proud gestures. And because the Jewish leaders would remain Jews, escorting the people only to the threshold of the church and themselves staying outside, the whole performance was to be elevated by a touch of candor. (*Diaries*, I, p. 7, emphasis added.)

Indeed, the cast of his mind is already apparent in the scheme: the sheer, almost insolent simplicity of the plan (which we have every reason to believe he propounded in all seriousness), the confidence in the power of transparent rationality to move other men's minds, the affection for the grand, theatrical gesture, the concern for detail and for staging; and, on the other hand, the astounding ignorance of, and insensitivity to, his own subject matter, the Jews themselves, let alone the painful, and at times hideous, nature of their extended relations with the Roman Church; and finally, the readiness to abandon the plan without a tear and change course while his mind continued to grope for a solution and "the Jewish Question continually bored into me and gnawed at me, tormented me, and made me very miserable."

A crank? It is all too easy to see Herzl—and dismiss him—as such. But along with the extravagant vision there was an entirely uncrankish charm of manner, much wit, no little kindness, and

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a warm, winning and, on occasion, self-deprecating sense of humor.

> Some of you have probably heard that I want to found the Jewish State and have come here to have a look at this strange and amusing man who proposes . . . so unusual an enterprise. . . . Others have probably heard of an extraordinary idea called Zionism which also promises to be an exceedingly amusing affair. Nothing certain is known about it. It is only said that all the Jews will suddenly pack their bags, leave the countries of their domicile and sail away to a new and unknown country to settle. . . . But in fact, ladies and gentlemen, Zionism intends no such wicked injury to our anti-Semites. Just imagine the clamor against the Jews disappearing from public life: what would remain! ? (Address to the Österreichisch-Israelitische Union [an organization for the protection of Jewish rights], November 7, 1896, *Kitvei Herzl,* VII, p. 27.)

And there was the professional journalist's eye for the social and political reality around him, for color, for the opportunity to convert his material into an article at once incisive and gay, intelligent and witty, sarcastic where possible, and with half an eye, as was proper, on his readers in Vienna: on the Palais Bourbon as a political exchange and as a club; on socialism as the heir of Boulangism; on the verbal style of the French politician; on the impossibility of effective censorship and how the Parisian censors had saved a play from failure by forbidding its performance; and, before long, in much the same spirit, on the *Judenfrage* in its French mold.

In June 1892 a young Jewish officer in the French army, a Captain Mayer, had challenged a notorious anti-Semite, the Marquis de Morès, to a duel, and was killed by a saber-thrust for his pains. The result was a sensation, a great public funeral, and a martyr's burial with military honors. It may be said that there was something in the atmosphere of the incident that presaged the very much greater affair that broke two years later and also hinged on the misfortunes of a Jewish polytechnician and captain in the French army.

Herzl duly reported the funeral, carefully linked dueling to Boulangism and the disappointed Boulangists to anti-Semitism, and went on to take the measure of anti-Semitism in France as a whole: "Here the Jews are not thrown to the mob." In the century in which the Jews were granted equality of rights the condition of the broad masses of the people had also improved beyond any expectation. Therefore, he argued, "the French people still remain strangers to, and without understanding of, anti-Semitism."

It was his first published piece on the subject. Read plain, it was cautious, tentative, and, insofar as it offered a judgment, wrong. Its optimism was misleading. If one reads it more carefully, however, the inner state of mind and the drift of Herzl's thinking on the subject are already apparent—notably in the wan irony of his opening reference to the pomp with which Mayer was buried, the great funeral cortège that followed his coffin, and the massed wreaths of flowers which hid it from sight.

> Until recently [Herzl began his piece] there was a measure of decency in French anti-Semitism, one could almost say: courtesy. . . . Even when it burst out against the Jews directly, it did not deny that they were human beings. For one coming here from other countries this was very surprising. In France the particular sin with which the Jews were charged was [only] that they are from Frankfurt [although] the injustice of the accusation is plain to see for some of them are from Mainz and even from Speier. In money matters there is anger with them only if they have any. They are often called "Israélites" [a term] which must be seen in itself as [reflecting] an easier attitude. However, the Jews have been most fortunate of all in their death. When their brilliant lives, the subject of so much envy, duly come to a successful end, these Jewish humans are buried among the Christian humans. In the cemetery there is a remarkable degree of cooperation; it is a thoroughly mixed society, as if before death there had been no difference [between Jews and Christians] at all. (*Neue Freie Presse,* September 3, 1892.)

Herzl had met anti-Semitism long before he got to France. He had been made aware of it as a schoolboy, as a student, and as a young adult. It was all around him in Hungary, in Austria, and in Germany. He had encountered it in all its forms, even the most vulgar.

> One evening I entered a cheap nightclub and had a beer. When I got up to leave and made my way to the door through the noise and the smoke, a fellow called "Hep, hep!" after me. A chorus of horse-laughs arose around him. (*Diaries,* I, p. 6.)

And yet while

> The Jewish Question naturally lurked for me around every turn and corner [and] I sighed over it and made fun of it [and] felt unhappy . . . still it never really took hold of me. (*Diaries* I, p. 5.)

It was only in Paris that he had begun to think of anti-Semitism as a universal phenomenon, probably because only there could he regard it—and its proponents—with the cold eye of the comparatively uninvolved foreign correspondent and stranger in France who, yet, could not doubt on what side of *this* particular argument he himself stood. In Paris, as he noted in his diary, "I could pass through the crowd unrecognized." And his years in Paris were crucial to his development in another way: it was in Paris that "I saw how the world is run."

Seeing "how the world is run" in the intense, relatively open, highly personal world of *fin de siècle* French parliamentary politics left an indelible impression on Herzl's mind. In Paris he witnessed the unfolding of the Panama scandal among other great and scandalous affairs of the day. His experiences there mitigated his tendency—innate, it would seem—to see and interpret the world in extravagantly generalized terms. Paris left him with a feel for the role of the individual in public affairs and forever on the watch—and with a taste—for the secret,

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for what might lie behind the scenes, and for the intricacy of connection between private and public interests. And it taught him enough about the common varieties of behavior on a central political stage to give him the initial confidence he needed when later he sought to operate upon such a one himself.

In a word, it was in Paris that he matured. He arrived at the age of thirty-one; he left at thirty-five. He had accepted the post of correspondent there, he wrote shortly before his return to Vienna, when his self-confidence was at its lowest ebb. Then "Paris got hold of me and shook me through and through." There he had been subjected to "daily, hourly convulsion with hundreds of thousands of powerful stimuli" and became "a different person, a different artist." It was in Paris, finally, that he acquired a sense of his own powers and a conjoint passionate will to employ them in the matter which, ostensibly, he was so ill-equipped to deal with, but which had "gnawed" at him all the while. At first as an "artist":

> I was at the sculptor Beer who made my bust. During one of the sessions I described to him the modern Jew and his condition. And in doing so I became engulfed in the white heat of great eruptions. [*Und ich geriet dabei in die Glut der grossen Eruptionen.*] When I left, the whole play shot upward in me like a granite pillar; I began to write it the next day in indescribable excitement. . . . (*Diaries,* I, pp. 11-13.)

Herzl later called the play *The New Ghetto.* It took him "three blessed weeks of ardor and labor," but nonetheless he failed to write himself "free of the matter" as he seems to have hoped. On the contrary: "The thought grew stronger in me that I must do something for the Jews." For the first time since his arrival in Paris he visited the city's principal synagogue and was, as he noted, reminded there of his youth and, looking at the congregation, "saw a family likeness in their faces: bold, misshapen noses; furtive and cunning eyes." He considered writing "a book for and about the Jews"; then, pressed by Alphonse Daudet to remember *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* turned to planning a novel. But the idea of a novel was dropped in turn. Instead, he drafted "a practical program" and noted in his newly begun diary that just how and why he had proceeded from one to the other "is already a mystery to me, although it happened within the last few weeks. It is in the realm of the Unconscious."

THE mystery remains—part of the larger mystery of Herzl's conversion (the term is appropriate) from a man privately disturbed by the phenomenon of anti-Semitism into one who tried to get to the bottom of the Jewish Question and resolve it—thereby endangering his professional reputation, as he was constantly reminded, incurring public anger and ridicule, cutting across the nervous grain of his own type and class, and being termed a Quixote, a St. Bernard the Hermit, the Mahdi of Pelikangasse, and, of course, King of the Jews. (He noted the epithets and recorded them without emotion in his diary.) The peculiar virulence of French anti-Semitism may well have shocked him; but the evidence does not support the theory that it was the Dreyfus case —and in particular the scene of Dreyfus's public degradation at the École Militaire (which he witnessed as a journalist) when the mob screamed *"A mort! A mort les juifs!"*—that changed the essentially conventional man of letters into a maverick and an *exalté.* Dreyfus may have helped precipitate the change in the sense that the case (it was not yet an *affaire*) contributed to tipping the balance between the opposing drives within him. But the roots of his obsession lay deeper—that much is plain—even if they cannot now be laid bare.

Nor can it be demonstrated conclusively—for all that it is superficially plausible—that he saw himself as a (or the) Messiah. But there is abundant evidence that he had long been powerfully aware of the legend of the Messiah and was later fully conscious of the fact that some of the simpler and more ardent of his followers could hardly keep from seeing him as the anointed Deliverer himself. For the rest, it is only of the ambivalence of his feelings on the subject that we can be really sure. He first heard of Sabbatai Zevi, the "false Messiah" of the 17th century, in June 1895; his curiosity was immediately aroused, and the analogy was neither rejected nor exactly confirmed. Years later (June 1900) he noted in his diary—which served as a commonplace book as well:

> The difference between myself and Sabbatai Zevi (the way I imagine him), apart from the difference in the technical means inherent in the times, is that Sabbatai made himself great so as to be the equal of the great of the earth. I, however, find the great small, as small as myself. (*Diaries,* III, p. 960.)

During his visit to Russia the year before his death he remarked, "Our people believe that I am the Messiah. I myself do not know this, for I am no theologian."

The delivery of the Jews from shame and bondage obsessed Herzl. He knew he was obsessed. He recognized the obsession as a source of strength. And it seems he took a keen delight in it. In a sense, it served him as the proof of the validity and importance of the enterprise upon which he had embarked.

> For some time past I have been occupied with a work of infinite grandeur. At the moment I do not know whether I shall carry it through. It looks like a mighty dream. But for days and weeks it has possessed me beyond the limits of consciousness; it accompanies me wherever I go, hovers behind my ordinary talk, looks over my shoulder at my comically trivial journalistic work, disturbs me and intoxicates me. (*Diaries,* I, p. 3.)

Thus the very first passage in his diary begun in May 1895. And like any sane man conscious that he is in the course of being propelled by powerful, semi-mystical drives, there is at first the fear of being taken for a madman—a fear redoubled by the perfectly clear-minded recognition of the incredible nature, the seeming extravagance and absurdity, of what he was about:

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What do I have to say on the Jewish Question? [he wrote to Bismarck] Actually it is very hard for me to utter the word. For if I do, the first impulse of every rational human being must be to send me to the observation room—Department for Inventors of Dirigible Balloons.

Well, how shall I preface it? Perhaps this way: two times two is four, two times three is six, 17 X 7 = 119, unless I am mistaken. I have five fingers on each hand. And I am writing with violet ink. And now I shall finally risk it:

I believe I have found the solution to the Jewish Question. Not *a* solution, but *the* solution, the only one. (*Diaries*, I, p. 118.)

Bismarck never replied.

Zionism Revisited: The Historic Enterprise

Hillel Halkin

THOUGH a voluminous literature exists by now on the Zionist movement, it is one that has plainly generated a good deal more heat than light. Good, bad, or indifferent, few of the hundreds of books that have been written about Zionism to date have been free of the polemical tone—surely a sign that the subject is still too much with us to encourage disinterested inquiry. Indeed, the very nature of the material has for the most part rendered it inaccessible to professional historians who do not tend by their origins to be partisans to the debate. It is impossible to write about Zionism in any depth without a knowledge of modern Hebrew and Jewish history, a desideratum that tends to exclude all but the more Jewishly-minded of Jewish scholars, just as one cannot really deal with the Palestine question without a similar grounding in the Arab world. Furthermore, while the number of serious historians who are at home in both of these relatively exotic areas is small to begin with, and most of these are Israelis, even in Israel, where some excellent studies have been written on various aspects of the Zionist experience and of Arab resistance to it, a serious overall history of the Zionist movement from its 19th-century inceptions to its culmination in the establishment of the State of Israel has yet to be attempted. It would be superfluous to insist, therefore, that Walter Laqueur's *A History of Zionism** is the best work of its kind to be written so far, inasmuch as it is also the first. Yet such are its virtues of comprehensiveness, readability, and common sense that one may safely predict that it will continue to be a basic text in its field long after it has been joined by rivals as ambitious as itself.

Professor Laqueur too, of course, has a "background," one which he does not hesitate to admit may have ultimately predisposed him toward his subject. A German Jew by birth who came to Palestine as a young refugee from Nazism in 1938 and is currently director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London and professor of contemporary history at the University of Tel Aviv, Laqueur holds an attitude toward the Zionist phenomenon which is not, as he puts it, one of "Olympian impartiality," but of unconcealed, if often critical, sympathy. Even the confirmed anti-Zionist reader, however, should be able to agree with Laqueur's opening statement that his book "is, I believe, a truthful account in the sense that I have not knowingly suppressed historical evidence and that I have tried to discuss dispassionately views which are not my own and which I deplore." *A History of Zionism* does have a point of view, which comes closest perhaps to identifying with the moderate, cautious, and always humane politics of Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist leader whom one senses the author most admires. Yet this never obtrudes on its ability to consider the other side of the question, whether this be the anti-Weizmannian militancy of a Jabotinsky or the violent anti-Zionism of the Jerusalem Mufti. Indeed, it is above all in his discussion of the Arab-Jewish conflict that Laqueur writes with a most commendable empathy for both sides. "Arab intransigence," he observes in the ninth of thirteen "Theses on Zionism" that constitute a kind of epilogue to the volume, "was the natural reaction of a people unwilling to share its country with another." How simple, how true—and yet how difficult to accept to this day for so many friends of Israel who believe that affirming the Zionist claim to Palestine necessarily means casting the Arabs in the role of refractory villains who were simply too wicked, or stubborn, or blind to their own interests, or even anti-Semitic, to sit down in good time and work out a reasonable settlement with the Jews.

IT is likely in fact that as historians of the future come to write about the Palestine question with increased detachment, they will more and more tend to the conclusion that if a reasonable settlement was not reached, this was less because of Arab or Jewish refusal to compromise than because such a settlement was never possible in the first place given a conflict which saw two peoples fighting for possession of the same piece of land.

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In this regard, "extremists" like the Mufti or Jabotinsky may simply have been more clear-sighted to begin with than "moderates" like Weizmann or Feisal. This has never been, of course, the "official" Zionist position, nor is it that of Laqueur, who writes: "The Arab thesis of inevitable Zionist expansion is a case of self-fulfilling prophecy: the Arabs did everything in their power to make this prophecy come true by choosing the road of armed resistance—and losing." Yet the assumption that, had the Arabs settled for three-quarters, or even half, of the Palestinian cake when it was offered them, they would still be in possession of it today, seems to me a dubious one. "Had the Arabs accepted the Peel Plan in 1937," Laqueur writes, "the Jewish state would have been restricted to the coastal plain between Tel Aviv and Haifa. Had they not rejected the UN partition of 1947, most of Palestine would still have remained in their hands." In light of the subsequent history of the region, however, does it not seem more probable that even if the 1947 partition plan had somehow been put into effect, to say nothing of the Peel Commission's implausible recommendations a decade earlier, the borders imposed would in any case have been redrawn by an eventual Arab-Israeli war?

It is difficult, to say the least, to imagine the State of Israel as we know it existing today within the three barely-touching patches of Palestine allotted to it by the 1947 UN partition map rather than desperately trying to break out of them at some point. This does not mean that men like Weizmann or Ben-Gurion were being hypocritical when they offered to accept partition in 1947 and urged the Arabs to do the same, for they undoubtedly thought that they were getting the best bargain that they could under the circumstances (although in private Ben-Gurion, at least, refused to rule out the possibility of expansion at some future date). It is easier to compromise, after all, over what one doesn't already possess. By the same token, the identical Israeli leadership that would have been sincerely ready to sign a peace treaty in May 1967 based on the 1949 armistice lines was unanimous in rejecting such a settlement a few months later—which is not necessarily proof, however, that the Six-Day War or its equivalent was ultimately avoidable. Our perspective on such questions tends to be a function of time. It is already possible for us to view the 1948 Arab-Israeli war as tragically preordained in a way that the 1967 fighting cannot be. The latter rather appears to us a product of well-remembered contingencies: what would have happened, we ask, had not Russian intelligence fed the Egyptians false reports in May 1967 concerning a purported Israeli troop build-up near Syria; had not U Thant precipitously withdrawn the UN peacekeeping force from the Sinai; had Nasser not announced the closing of the Straits of Tiran? Yet to historians of the future, such questions may seem largely irrelevant. The 1967 war, they may decide, broke out because it had to, that is, because the results of the 1948-49 fighting were by their very nature so unstable that they were sooner or later bound to lead to another round.

Of course, they may be wrong about this, and we, as recent "eyewitnesses," may be right in our sense that there was a great deal of meaningless accident about what happened in 1967. Distance may be a great clarifier, but the clarity it offers can easily be that of an illusion. This of course is the historical theme of Tolstoy's *War and Peace,* which portrays the infantryman in battle who sees nothing but blind chaos around him as being closer to the truth than the generals, who perceive what is happening at a sufficient remove to be able to resolve it into a pattern that seems to them comprehensible and even in a sense inescapable. One can view any part of the past deterministically or not, and perhaps every historian must adopt one or the other basic attitude toward his material before sitting down to write. Laqueur tries to keep his *History of Zionism* away from such metaphysical shoals—"This study is not," he writes in the preface, "an exercise in the philosophy of history"—but on the whole it is clear that he takes a "contingencist" view. Though Zionism, as he sees it, was perhaps an inevitable response among a certain sector of the Jewish people to a number of modern trends and developments, there was nothing inevitable about its final success. On the contrary, without the intervention of certain "chance" events—"chance" in the sense that there was nothing foreseeable or inherent about them in the dynamic of Zionism itself—the Zionist movement, Laqueur intimates, might have never developed real strength, and would certainly not have achieved its goal of a Jewish state.

Of such events, Laqueur singles out three for special attention, making each a central strand of his narrative: the career of Herzl, the Balfour Declaration, and the Nazi destruction of European Jewry. Each of these, he argues, was in its own way an indispensable condition for Zionism's success; moreover, the Zionist cause would have been struck a mortal blow had each not occurred exactly when it did, for "Being a latecomer among the national movements, Zionism was from the very beginning a movement in a hurry, forever racing against time." There can be no quarrel with this last statement, nor with the proposition that Herzl, the Balfour Declaration, and the Holocaust must indeed be assigned a central place in any responsible history of Zionism. And yet, I should like to play the devil's advocate here and ask if any of these events was indeed the necessary ingredient of Zionism's success that Laqueur assumes it to have been, and whether the processes leading to the creation of a Jewish state were not perhaps more historically "determined" than his study suggests.

Herzl, certainly, was a far more ambiguous figure in the history of the Zionist movement than Laqueur or most other writers have allowed. Laqueur, for instance, writes, "But for him, Zionism would have remained a movement of fairly narrow appeal, aiming at a cultural renaissance which incidentally also engaged in philan-

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thropic-colonizing activities. Herzl transformed a mood into a political movement and put it on the European map. . . . Through his efforts a tremendous uplift was given to the self-confidence of hundreds of thousands of Jews in Eastern Europe who could not be integrated into their countries of origin. . . ." Yet it would probably be truer to say that without the Jews of Eastern Europe, many of whom were already Zionists when Herzl was still writing comedies for the Viennese stage, and many more of whom were sociologically and psychologically ripe for Zionism in any case, Herzl himself would be remembered as little more than the celebrated crank most Central and Western European Jewish intellectuals assumed him to be when he published his *Die Judenstaat* in 1896. East-European Jewry was Herzl's one ready-made constituency, but it was not a constituency without gifted Zionist leaders of its own, men like Weizmann, Sokolow, Ussishkin, and Jabotinsky, all of whom, it must be said, Laqueur deals with fairly and at length. Such men, for the most part, were Zionists before they had ever heard of Herzl, fought him tooth-and-nail at the early Zionist Congresses (particularly at the famous sixth one in 1903, which Herzl nearly wrecked trying to carry his Uganda resolution), and naturally assumed leadership of the movement after his death. They did not have Herzl's glamor, to be sure, which admittedly fired the imagination of many a *shtetl* Jew, but neither did they have his megalomania, his aristocratic pretensions, his admiration for imperialism, his impatience with careful organizational work among the Jewish masses, his lack of real roots in Jewish culture or tradition, his unrealistic sense of how political decisions are made.

If there was something romantically grand about the figure that Herzl cut there was also something faintly ridiculous about it, and it is more than likely that had he not died prematurely at the age of forty-four, he would have become an increasing embarrassment and hindrance to the movement that he headed. How would the history of Zionism have differed had he never became a Zionist at all? I would suggest, at least, that the answer may be: very little. Perhaps the speedy internationalization of the movement—prior to Herzl it was confined almost entirely to the Jews of the Russian Empire—might have been retarded but there is no reason to suppose that it would have been indefinitely postponed. It was Weizmann, after all, who first won, in the form of the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate, the international charter for Zionism that had been Herzl's great dream, and Weizmann would have existed even if Herzl had not.

We come, then, to the Balfour Declaration, which arrived, Laqueur writes, "at the last possible moment," meaning, I suppose, that if the Zionist claim to Palestine had not been recognized first by the British in 1917 and later by the Versailles Peace Conference in 1921, the chances for such recognition would have been permanently lost. Supposing this to be the case, however: does it follow that the chances of Zionism itself would have been lost as well? Again let me suggest an answer in the negative. The truly urgent need of the Zionist movement at the commencement of the Palestine Mandate was not formal recognition so much as the guaranteed right of unrestricted immigration and colonization, which had been severely curtailed by the Turks, and there would have been strong pressures on the British to grant this even without an official declaration of intent. Indeed, the case can be made that in the early 1920's it was in Great Britain's imperial interest as conceived by the British themselves to welcome Jewish immigration to Palestine, which among other things facilitated the tactics of divide-and-rule on which the British colonial administration was based: a Palestine without Jewish settlement would have been one without a Jewish-Arab conflict, but it would also have been one in which Arab demands for independence would have arisen far sooner and been far more difficult to reject. In any case, it is far from obvious that the Balfour Declaration was particularly effective either in encouraging Jews to settle in Palestine or in safeguarding Zionist rights there. The Declaration may have been received euphorically by Jews all over the world, but Laqueur himself points out that only 30,000 of them chose to immigrate to Palestine in the first five years after it was issued—barely double the amount that came during the last five years of pre-war Turkish rule, when conditions in the country were incomparably more difficult. (Immigration picked up significantly only in 1924, possibly as a result of the new immigration restrictions passed that year in the United States.) On the other hand, the period of the 1930's, during which worsening conditions in Europe made Palestine an increasingly crucial haven for Jews, was precisely the time that the British chose to renege on their commitments to Zionism, a process that culminated in the 1939 White Paper, which effectively put an end to both immigration and colonization in one stroke. Clearly the British made use of the Balfour Declaration when it suited them and ignored it when it did not, and would in all likelihood have followed much the same policies in its absence. Is this to say that the Declaration was of no service to Zionism at all? Obviously not; but it is to suggest that neither was it necessarily a *sine qua non* of the movement's success.

Finally, we come to the painful subject of the Holocaust—and it is here that I feel most compelled to take issue with Laqueur for his espousal of a thesis which in its more benign form has become an accepted axiom today even among pro-Zionists, and in a more malignant manifestation has led to such vicious distortions of history as the current Soviet calumny that Zionism and Nazism were conscious wartime allies. "The birth of the Jewish state," Laqueur writes, "was the fulfilment of the Zionist dream. But it had taken the destruction of European Jewry to realize this aim. Zionism had not been able to prevent the catastrophe. On the contrary, the state owed its existence to the disaster." But did it really? Laqueur ex-

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plains that the Holocaust made the creation of Israel possible both by creating a Jewish refugee problem in Europe that put pressure upon the world powers to open the gates of Palestine to the survivors of the death camps, and by enabling the Zionist leadership to play upon widespread feelings of sympathy and guilt in order to mobilize world public opinion in favor of a Jewish state. The argument concerning the refugees seems to me fundamentally misleading. True, World War II did leave in its wake several hundred thousand displaced Jews, a large number of whom wished to go to Palestine. Yet let us undertake a simple exercise of the historical imagination and ask ourselves what the situation of European Jewry would have been had the Second World War been commenced, fought, and terminated exactly as it was with only one exception, namely, that the Nazi regime had not been insanely anti-Semitic and that the Final Solution had not been carried out. The answer seems clear: instead of several hundred thousand dislocated Jews at the war's end, many of them knocking on the doors of Palestine, there might well have been several million.

One must remember, after all, that the large Jewish communities devastated most completely by the Nazis, those of Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and to a lesser extent, Rumania, were precisely the least assimilated and the most rooted in Jewish tradition, the most affected by economic hardship and indigenous anti-Semitism even before the war, and the ones in which the Zionist movement had traditionally had its greatest strength. Even without the death camps, many of these Jews would have been uprooted and made destitute by the war itself, by local pogroms, and by the postwar Communist takeover, which economically liquidated the classes to which they largely belonged. To a good percentage of them, Palestine would have seemed not only the most desirable, but the only possible solution. Can it really be argued that Zionism emerged from the war in a stronger position because several million of its potentially most committed adherents were dead rather than alive? I think not.

As for world public opinion, it undoubtedly did play a role in abetting the creation of Israel, yet even in the late 1940's the plight of European Jewry was hardly a "gut issue" among large blocs of voters in the democratic world—with the exception, that is, of the Jews of America, who might have been counted on to be pro-Zionist without the Holocaust too. Of the five major powers asked to vote on the establishment of a Jewish state in the General Assembly in November 1947, Britain and China abstained, the Soviet Union voted yes for reasons of foreign policy which had nothing to do with pro-Jewish sentiment, and only France and the United States were conceivably swayed by considerations of public opinion at all. Public opinion did not influence any major power to come to Israel's aid after it was attacked by the Arab states in May 1948, nor is it evident in what way history would have been changed had the United Nations never voted for partition at all. The British would in all likelihood still have withdrawn from Palestine, the Arab-Jewish war would still have broken out, and the State of Israel would still have been established within roughly the same boundaries that it occupied until 1967. True, a Jewish state without United Nations sanction might have, as Laqueur says, "come into existence . . . under very inauspicious circumstances," but what of it? The UN as a resolution-passing body has been almost unremittingly hostile toward Israel since the mid-1950's without this preventing the Israeli government from effectively asserting its legitimacy or conducting normal diplomatic relations with most of the world. Presumably Israel could have survived such an attitude had it begun several years earlier too.

I do not raise these objections in a spirit of dogmatic certainty, or to detract in any way from the excellence of Professor Laqueur's book, but simply to propose that there is an alternative reading of Zionist history to the one he provides. Such a reading would be more concerned with the question of continuity between Zionist feeling and thought and the 19th-century modernist crisis in the religious and intellectual life of East-European Jewry; it would seek to examine more deeply the forces that made Zionists out of some Jews and non- or anti-Zionists out of others; and it would emphasize Zionist politics less and the social processes underlying them more. In a sense it would also take more seriously the Zionists' own analysis of the modern Jewish condition, and ask whether, despite their myths and their many simplifications, the Zionists may have succeeded not because they were "lucky," or because history took an unexpected turn in their direction, but because they were essentially right. I do not mean by this that their success was any more "inevitable" than Laqueur assumes it to have been (it is possible, after all, to be right and fail miserably too), but rather that it was determined by the same objective historical factors—anti-Semitism (particularly in its secular, nationalist form) and Jewish economic vulnerability, on the negative side, and Jewish nationalism and the sheer will for group survival, on the positive—that Zionism had counted on all along. It is indeed one of Zionism's peculiarities that while it cannot boast among its followers a single outstanding intellectual theoretician of the type produced by so many other contemporary social and political "isms" (an indication perhaps that it is not really an ideological "ism" at all), its basic predictions concerning the fate of the Jewish people in our time have turned out to be far more accurate than those of any of its numerous detractors. There is still a book to be written about why this should have been so.

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"An American Family"

Sara Sanborn

As ALL the world must know by now, a production crew from WNET Television in New York spent two years and over $1,000,000, plus a prodigious amount of talent and energy, pursuing the William C. Loud family through better and worse to produce the documentary series, *An American Family*. No less an authority than Margaret Mead has proclaimed this series "as important for our time as the invention of drama and the novel were for earlier generations" and "a new way to help people understand themselves." There is indeed much to be learned from *An American Family*, but if the morals of the story are the ones that have been generally educed, then the makers of the series got a very small store of shopworn understanding for a very high price. For the series to repay in social insight the money, effort, and emotional anguish it cost, we are going to have to dig out of it more than the few glittering generalities about non-communication with which it was apparently seeded.

The first step to mining *An American Family* is to put the Louds back into context. One of the more interesting phenomena surrounding the series has been the number of writers who felt called to review not the television program, but the family, in commentary that reads like a social worker's case notes. We talked about the Louds as if the picture tube were indeed a one-way window on their lives, as if the family went serenely about their business while we peered in like children watching the activity in a glass-sided ant village. A photograph that appeared in *Time* gives a truer perspective. It shows Kevin Loud lying on the sofa and playing his guitar, while Grant sits at the piano: a familiar enough scene to watchers of the series, except that in a corner of the room only a few feet from the boys stands the camera crew, shooting away, the sound-woman smiling broadly at Kevin.

IN the opening segment of the series, Craig Gilbert, the producer, acknowledges with disarming candor that of course the presence of the camera had some effect on the Louds. Gilbert, however, obviously believes that the camera's effect was minor; that it was partially offset by the "closeness" that developed between the film crew and the family and by the Louds's resolution not to try to conceal their "problems"; and that after allowing for the camera's effect, there was a generous measure of "truth" left over. In fact, appearing on television is the organizing principle of the Louds' family life *as we see it*. The publicity surrounding the show is somewhat misleading in its references to the film crew "living with" the family and filming "up to eighteen hours per day." According to WNET staff members, the crew did not actually live in the Louds' home, but slept and took their meals elsewhere. And there could not have been many days when filming went on for eighteen hours, for over the entire seven-month period only 300 hours of film were taken—an average of fewer than 45 hours per month. Thus, even the *un*edited film represents only a fraction of the Louds' lives, and its fidelity to those lives is limited at the outset by what the camera crew thought worth recording.

It is also worth recalling what has apparently been often forgotten, that the Louds too had substantial powers of inclusion and exclusion. The family had ample opportunity when the film crew was away from the house to engage in that intimate "communication" which critics gleefully noticed was absent from the film. On the *Dick Cavett Show*, Lance Loud acknowledged casually that during his mother's televised visit to New York, where he had joined the homosexual sub-culture, they did all of their serious talking "in taxicabs."

We may have no difficulty believing that the Louds became accustomed to the presence of observers in their lives; that they used the camera to send messages to each other, as a sounding board (they occasionally deliver soliloquies), or as a confidant, that they accepted the crew as trusted friends and perhaps as counselors. But we cannot believe that they often literally forgot the camera was there, and people commonly mislead and pose before their best friends, their confessors, and their psychoanalysts. Selection and exclusion began long before the final editing, which the Louds claim falsified their family life, and in order to estimate the worth of the program as a "documentary," we need to know what the principles of selection were.

SOME of the film crew's principles of selection are quite apparent in the final product, which is not, after all, a scholarly study, but a television show intended to keep an audience returning week after week as to an old-fashioned movie serial. (In this connection the Louds' divorce was an extraordinary piece of luck for Gilbert. As Cleveland Amory pointed out, the divorce is the only thing that makes the series "work.") Since most people will not sit still for long stretches of quotidian dullness or closet drama, anything with entertainment value obviously had to be worked for all it was worth. Thus the Loud children are constantly used as performers, dancing, singing, playing the guitar. The two children with the least entertainment value, Kevin and Michelle, are given least attention, while Lance, who can always be counted on for color and flamboy-

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ance, gets the most. Kevin disappears for several episodes while on a trip to Australia, but Lance is lovingly pursued through the homosexual *milieux* of New York and Paris in a sort of counter-culture travelogue. We know that these happy, hedonistic children of the California sun do in fact go to school, because we are shown a short clip of Grant trying to answer the clumsy questions of an obviously self-conscious teacher. However, the producer indicates where his interests lie by balancing two minutes in history class with twenty minutes at an outdoor saturnalia featuring swinging cheerleaders, students in animal costumes, a rock-and-roll band, and a long performance by Grant in red satin shorts as lead singer. No doubt this is also where Grant's interests lie, but even allowing for the maximum amount of teen-age mindlessness, he and the other children surely lead more substantial lives than this program suggests. Adolescence is perhaps above all a private and introspective time. The film's emphasis on showing-off and youthful hijinks—interspersed with some thoroughly routine Meaningful Moments—produces a vision of contemporary youth about as profound as an Annette Funicello movie.

In other ways, too, the pressure of form shapes content, which in turn is held to have immense sociological significance. For example, nobody in this series works. There are many scenes of Bill Loud in his office, but in nearly all of them he is talking to a member of the family either in person or on the phone, or else is talking about his family to his business associates. Is Bill always this "compulsive" about discussing his children, as one writer thought? Or did he, on the distinctive occasions when the camera was in his office, feel obliged to tie the scene back into the main narrative, the family drama? One must, after all, talk about something while a camera is running; very likely Bill's colleagues were as self-conscious and tongue-tied as non-family members generally seem to be in the film, and besides, business talk is notoriously uninteresting to outsiders. Nor is it interesting to watch a man think, plan, dictate memos, study trade papers, or order materials, so we have little sense of what Bill does all day besides interact with his family. We know from what he says to Pat and others that he is both ambitious and passionately interested in his business, and that it takes a great deal of his time. But on the screen he generally seems to "work" like all other businessmen on television, by sitting in a handsomely decorated office and glancing at papers or talking on the phone in twenty-second stints.

Pat Loud is apparently even more idle. Although her house is beautifully kept and her family well-fed and dressed, all of this seems to come about without human agency. Twice we see her serve a meal, but otherwise she seems unoccupied with much except her own and the family's emotional problems. Again, the medium dictates the message: nobody wants to watch a woman scrubbing floors or peeling potatoes for even as long as it takes to get the job done; there is no titillation in peeping on someone reading a book, listening to records, or writing letters. So in this truthful picture of an American family, the wife and mother looks as if she had been created by rolling together two of television's favorite heroines, the housewife of the commercials and the housewife of the soap operas. Like the one Pat is always smartly dressed and seemingly untouched by the grit of daily housekeeping; like the other, her whole business in the world is the emotions, life as one long encounter group. Small wonder if the Louds' lives seem hollow, since we so rarely see them *do* anything. The apparent lack of serious occupations, the relentless togetherness, the amount of time spent in trivial conversation may say less about the Louds than it does about the needs of the medium and the conventional vision of the film's producers.

For this film is extremely conventional, less an examination of American myths, attitudes, and values, as it purports to be, than a rehash of some of the more fashionable ones. Both the social vision of this film and the images used to convey it are depressingly hackneyed, its range of visual language about as broad as what we could expect to see on any prime-time series, and as predictable.

A favorite means of elucidating Bill Loud's character and personal world, for example, is to show him "in the field" in conjunction with some heavy machinery and sunburned hard-hats. This is meant to evoke the hearty, simple, virile World of Men, and we recognize it at once from the beer and cigarette commercials. The accumulating tensions of the marriage are summed up in another visual statement of surpassing banality: during an uncomfortable dinner in a restaurant, the camera focuses for a prolonged moment on Pat's hands stirring her fourth drink and then reaching jerkily for a cigarette, in an image that recalls every cliché of the tense, unfulfilled suburban housewife. Lack of communication is repeatedly suggested by shots that linger caressingly on Pat's immobile face and come to rest on her blankly unrevealing dark glasses or her wide, faraway stare.

The series opens, "After the Fall," on New Year's Eve, with Pat alone bravely carrying on with a party for the children and their friends. The camera plays back and forth from the carefree, rowdy kids to stoic Pat, emphasizing her solitariness, her heavy burden as a single parent. When she joins the young people at midnight to sing "Auld Lang Syne," the scene is both touching and an emotional cliché. The sympathy that we feel for Pat is as genuine and also as thoroughly conditioned as the leap of the heart to martial music. These are the kinds of scenes that movie advertisements tell us will bring tears to our eyes or a smile to our hearts, and film producers know just how to construct them. It is hardly surprising that so many of us found the series moving and authentic. Every effort was made to shape it to our well-conditioned expectations.

The Louds, of course, have also been educated by the media. The

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effect of the television camera—the bright light of self-consciousness—on the family seems to have been to start each of them acting in his own way like—a character on TV. On the *Dick Cavett Show*, Bill Loud explained that he had agreed to the filming because he was "proud" of his family and thought the whole experience would be a great "adventure." He thought the show should have been done more "like *Laugh-In*." Bill's idea of a family on television seems to have been drawn from *Father Knows Best* or *Ozzie and Harriet*—a fast-moving comedy hour with the witty and talented Louds, maybe a chance to launch Grant as a rock star (remember Ricky Nelson?), and himself as the wise and genial paterfamilias, joking brightly at the breakfast table at 6:30 in the morning.

PAT LOUD said she had agreed to the project because she thought a study of the Louds' "family dynamics" would be "helpful to other people." This sounds like a distinctly *ex-post-facto* rationalization—does anyone, no matter how altruistic, really want to be a Horrible Example? However, the statement is typical of the with-it, socially-enlightened commentary that constantly proceeded from Pat Loud in all her public appearances. When one of the children remarked that the family members had been unable to help each other solve problems, Pat quickly interrupted, "We can be supportive—we can be supportive, but you must solve your *own* problems." She is the complete Modern Mother, dealing out everyone's share of understanding and acceptance, but never intruding or "imposing" her values on the children. In seven months, we never see either Pat or Bill get angry with their offspring, no matter how trying they are. Instead there are heart-to-heart talks and constant reassurances for each child of his near-perfection in his parents' eyes. It is family life as dictated, on the one hand, by the cozy domestic comedies and, on the other, by the experts on interpersonal relations who populate the talk shows.

Lance, of course, nearly steals the show from his complaisant parents. He is a "natural" (which means unnatural) for television, constantly posing and mugging, delivering a series of one-liners that make him sound like an adolescent Oscar Wilde, and running through every theatrical gesture in the stereotyped homosexual repertoire. Lance seems to have been literally brought to life by television; it is hard to believe he exists when no one is watching. Here, most clearly, the medium has created the phenomenon it now purports to study, thereby giving another turn to the wheel.

And beyond the family, finally, just a bit more up-to-date and sophisticated in its clichés than any of these amateurs, was the film crew, relentlessly recording the family's more obvious role-playing in order to make a statement about non-communication and inauthenticity. After watching the Louds for twelve weeks we can still only conjecture about their "real" lives, about the extent to which they had been and are still being shaped by cultural stereotypes. But we can be sure that the decision to use the Louds for a study of American family life was so shaped. Although Craig Gilbert could announce with sublime condescension, on the Cavett show, that he was sure the American public would view the family with "understanding" and "compassion," it seems clear that the Louds were set up to be put down.

GILBERT anticipated in the opening segment one obvious objection to the film as social anthropology by assuring us that the affluent, good-looking Louds "are neither typical nor average. No family is." However, he surely considered them representative, or he would hardly have bothered to study them. WNET press releases and Gilbert's various interviews confirm that he "attempted to answer some of the larger questions about American society," and that he hoped, by filming a "normal" family over a long period, to illuminate much that is happening in America. What kind of family did he consider "normal"?

An interview published in the Los Angeles *Times* is revealing. Having decided that California was the likely place to seek the "now" family—a significant decision in itself—Gilbert began his search by consulting—family therapists. He was, he says, "worried about what this might do to a family, and I wanted one already in therapy." But it is obvious that he was also seeking specifically a troubled family, and furthermore, one with the affluence and sophistication to seek a therapist, the habit of self-exposure, and the already-learned ability to define itself in contemporary psychiatric terms.

After failing to locate the kind of family he wanted, Gilbert chanced to read Ross Macdonald's detective story, *The Underground Man*, which "described with absolute accuracy the kind of family I was looking for." For those who haven't read Macdonald's mysteries, the author specializes in affluent California families whose glossy exteriors cover hidden taint, moral degeneration, selfishness, and mutual exploitation of epic proportions. Macdonald's characteristic themes are money, generational decay, and deception, usually eventuating in murder. Gilbert flew at once to Macdonald's home town of Santa Barbara, and there he stumbled across the Louds, exactly the "right" family at last. Did commentators on the series know that Gilbert's idea of a representative family was perfectly realized in the literary vision of a best-selling author? And did the Louds know what parts they had been cast for?

Hence, *An American Family*, a drama in conflicting stereotypes. Future social historians may indeed find the film illuminating, but less for what it shows of the family—we can scarcely make any firm statement about them, since we know only their public images—than as an illustrated guide to the variously fashionable wisdom of our times. Naturally the Louds felt resentful and betrayed at the film that resulted from their great "adventure." No doubt they thought they had played themselves most winningly, according to the best popular models. Unfortunately for them, the styles had changed, and the more knowing film-makers had the last word.

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A Mother's Vengeance

William S. Pechter

"It's nothing but a tissue of lies. . . . Tell me what matters. Nothing. . . . I can't breathe anymore because of all the guilt. . . . What we all found was incontrovertible evidence that everything means zero. . . . Don't touch me. I hate any sort of contact. . . . Exactly what do you want? Exactly nothing. . . . Nothing, no one can help me. . . . We've both been out there. Where nothing is. . . . Can you imagine how someone can live with all the hate I have to bear? . . . Nothing applies."

Some of the lines above are from Frank Perry's *Play It As It Lays* and some from Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers,* and perhaps you can tell which are from where because I'm no longer sure I can. One knows it's in *Cries and Whispers* that a minister eulogizes, "Pray for us who are left here on the dark, dirty earth under an empty and cruel heaven. . . . Ask Him to free us at last from our anxiety . . . and our deep doubt. Ask Him for a meaning to our lives," because there are no ministers in the world of *Play It As It Lays.* And one knows it's in *Play It As It Lays,* because of *Cries and Whispers*' period setting, that one character replies to another's mention of children, "I used to have one. She totaled my Chevy." But is it in *Cries and Whispers* or *Play It As It Lays* that an aborted fetus is tossed away with some trash, or a character performs an act of self-mutilation by inserting a fragment of broken glass into her vagina? Yes, it's true that the unalleviated despair of one film is associated with a particularly American *dolce vita,* and that of the other with the human condition; the difference seems to me small. And despite all the meticulous artistry of the Bergman film, and the fact of its being a few rungs up on the cultural ladder, the distinctions which might be made between either of the two films and posturing rubbish seem to me so small as to verge on the hairsplitting.

Midway through *The Passion of Anna,* the first half of which seems to me as good as anything Bergman has done and enormously impressive, we suddenly become aware (in the course of a conversation between the two principal male characters) of a gap in our information, a lacuna in the action during which one of the men and one of the two principal women have started living together. From then on, all of the director's familiar preoccupations seem no longer to emerge organically from the materials of the film but to be imposed on them, and unfortunately it's the second and not the first half of *The Passion of Anna* which most of Bergman's later work resembles. I once heard it said of Bresson's dreadful *Une Femme Douce* that the chief problem plaguing the marriage of the film's two main characters is that they have Bresson for a director, a comment which might be extended to both *Play It As It Lays* and *Cries and Whispers.* My objection to the despair of these films has nothing to do with its correspondence or noncorrespondence with my view of the world, but to the fact of its being wholly uncreated, just insisted upon; it's not a matter in a *Cries and Whispers* (or a *Persona*) of our not understanding the precise nature of the despair, or even of our not understanding exactly what is happening; the failure isn't one of making us understand, but of compelling our belief. Early on in the scenario of *Cries and Whispers,* the director enumerates the various lighting conditions the film will strive for: "soft firelight . . . the gentle radiance from an oil lamp. *The torment of a bright, sunny autumn day*" (emphasis mine). There are, of course, writers in whose work such emotional coloration could be achieved and made convincing; in Bergman's, it has the effect of a nervous tic.

In a recent article, Joan Didion makes an attempt to discredit all film criticism on grounds of the insoluble problems of authorship, of knowing of any given film who really did what. But though Miss Didion (who co-authored the screenplay of *Play It As It Lays* from her own novel, and received as faithful an adaptation of a novel into film as any author might wish for) has good reason to hope to see the film of *Play It As It Lays* attributed to someone—anyone—else, attribution remains a problem less of film criticism than of scholarship; the proper subject of film criticism isn't authors, but works: not who did it, but what was done. The trouble with both *Play It As It Lays* and *Cries and Whispers* is that they aren't works, just the asserted sensibilities of their authors. It is their authors who are "tormenting" the autumn day, and everything else. "Maybe I was holding all the aces, but what was the game?" the heroine of *Play It As It Lays* asks at one point; later, at the film's conclusion, she declares, "I know what nothing is, and keep on playing" and, when asked why, replies with an enigmatic smile, "Why not?" I think you can be pretty sure that, when your aces are such frivolously "deep" answers as that one, the game is loaded questions, and someone is dealing from a stacked deck.

From the moment Harry Stoner wakes up in his palatial house,

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and, via his remote controls, turns on his television set to hear, in rapid succession, news of Vietnam, of a freeway accident (or was it a building collapse?), the smog report, and a dog food commercial, you know it's going to be another bad day in Los Angeles, America. As it happens, this will be the day (give or take a few hours) in which Harry will decide to commit arson on one of his factories (because declaring bankruptcy of his ladies' sportswear business would reveal that the previous year he'd done "a ballet with the books"), and veer further toward a nervous breakdown and complete withdrawal into some simpler past. Along the way, he'll pimp for a buyer, visit a porno theater, sleep with a hippie, and generally wonder what this country is coming to.

SPIRITUALLY, in *Save the Tiger,* we are in Arthur Miller country, from the sludgelike prose and sledgehammer subtlety to the pulpy abstractions and earnest tone of high moral seriousness. The telltale signs abound. Despite his big house and remote controls, Harry is unhappy; he has built his life on the evanescent standards of commercial enterprise, while the old-world cutter in his shop, though poor, remains happy because he "has his craft." Attempting to overcome his partner's objections to the act of arson, Harry speaks of a country in which "there are no rules any more, only referees," and declares, "If we were making missiles and flat on our back, we'd get a certified check from Congress in the morning." (Well, yes, one may assent, but the man who will commit arson to cover up his previous juggling of his books will find his rationalization for doing so, another if not that one.) No point is made that's not italicized and underlined. In one scene, with a hint at nuances of perverted pleasures beyond human ken, a prostitute unpacks her wares, among them a variety of oils including baby oil, olive oil, and just about every other kind of oil except banana oil, which nevertheless is elsewhere to be found in profusion throughout the film.

And yet, while I have no doubt that *Save the Tiger* is a bad movie (though Jack Lemmon, after a shaky start and despite a few impossible scenes, does manage to break out of the comic marionette mold he's adopted for so many years), its disaffection does finally generate a crude power far beyond that of the ritzy nihilism of *Play It As It Lays,* or the metaphysical anguish of *Cries and Whispers.* As in *Death of a Salesman,* though the superstructure of social criticism (the we-are-all-salesmen metaphor, the business about being "well-liked") may totter, beneath is is some kind of bedrock (the failures we've all experienced between fathers and sons); so, too, is *Save the Tiger* propped up by an idea which, however bad, is surprisingly forceful. A few years ago, I was addicted to Rod Serling's television series, *The Twilight Zone,* and noticed in it the recurrence of a theme which, whether developed by Serling or one of the program's other writers, was always treated with an intensity of feeling far in excess of the series' norm: the appeal of a simpler past, of a lost innocence. In one of the shows, a man embroiled in the rat race of modern-day toy designing returns to his childhood neighborhood to find it has remained unchanged and its inhabitants haven't aged; in another, an actor, harried by the clamorous importunings of agents and his alimony-hungry ex-wife, literally escapes into the happy family life depicted in the movie in which he's acting; in yet another, an ulcerous advertising executive, dozing on his commuter run to Connecticut, continually dreams of the train stopping at an idyllic, turn-of-the-century small town, redolent of county-fair Americana, and one day he actually disembarks there.

IN *Save the Tiger,* as the accumulating complexities of his present life urgently press in on him, Harry Stoner increasingly turns toward thoughts of a happier time in a happier land: when everyone was united in the desire to defeat Hitler, baseball was played on dirt rather than plastic, one could listen to Benny Goodman instead of rock, and everywhere there was "craft," quality, and people doing what was honest and right. What is wrong with this idea, so dear to television and movie writers and producers (and the writer of *Save the Tiger is* its producer), is not that it has no validity, but that its focus is so self-indulgently misplaced. One responds to the idea, and I do: the feeling of a loss of innocence is an experience vaguely shared by everyone, and, even if one knows better, it's easy to sentimentalize old times. But it's not the times, or a country, that are any more or less corrupt; the innocence lost is not America's but one's own. Harry Stoner dreams of years gone by in a better America when he wouldn't have to set fire to his factory. But this year Harry Stoner burns down a factory, because last year he did a ballet with his books.

JUST when the Jewish mother (and her embryonic incarnation in her marriage-obsessed daughter) became stock comic figures in our popular culture would be hard to say, though clearly *Portnoy's Complaint* solemnized and made literarily respectable the occasion. As early as in Odets's *Awake and Sing,* one sees a Jewish mother as semi-monster, but, though *Awake and Sing* aims at a universalization of a particular experience, it respects the contours of Bessie Berger as an individual, ultimately pitiable person, and never relinquishes her to caricature and stereotype. And if *Awake and Sing* can be bitter, it is, even at its bitterest, free of that most salient trait of the new depiction of the Jewish mother: self-hatred.

Just why this phenomenon should surface now, and be put so publicly on view, is something I can only guess at, but my guess would be that it is at the least intimately connected with the recent surfacing of anti-Semitism among blacks and the political Left generally, and the ensuing loss of privileged status felt by the Jew within the liberal community. "You are your mother," Noel Airman tells Marjorie Morningstar (at least in the film, though the sense if not the words is in the book) when she attempts to apologize for her

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mother's behavior, which seems fair comment, except that Marjorie misses a trick in not replying to Noel (née Saul Ehrmann), "But you, too, are your mother." Which, given how much the content of the Judaism of my own college-in-the-50's generation of lapsed Jews consists of a sentimentality about Jewish food, may only be a variant of the adage, "You are what you eat." In any case, the Jew's preemption of the anti-Semitic caricature of the Jewish mother seems at once an apology once removed for our failings, and an act of revenge on those who left their mark on us.

For a considerable portion of its length, *The Heartbreak Kid* seems merely to be another mining of this lode of Jewish self-hatred. On brief acquaintance, Lenny Cantrow marries Lila Kolodny, and, almost as soon as she's been sexually demystified (she'd been making Lenny wait until the honeymoon), she is revealed to him as the proto-Jewish mother in all her gross vulgarity. Loud and inescapable, virtuoso of nonstop talking and eating undeterred even by sex ("Is it as good as you thought it would be?" she asks as they make love, and whips out a candy bar immediately after), her character, whatever one may think of the creation, *is* a creation. And anything the actress, Jeannie Berlin, fails to suggest of the character's insistently smothering presence, the film fills in by its sense of her encroachment on its space, from the narrow squeeze down the aisle at the opening wedding through her crowding in the car on the honeymoon trip to the hotel room where, laid up by a sunburn, she waits to pounce on Lenny each time he enters. Yet even as one admires the deftness with which all this is done, one is repelled by its cruelty; rather like Madeline Kahn's fiancée in *What's Up, Doc?*, a character seems drawn for no other purpose than to humiliate her, and, unappealing as the character may be, the film's treatment of her seems less appealing still. It isn't enough that, broiled red by the sun, she must smear herself thickly with what looks like Crisco; she must also be seen eating, with egg salad over her face. And as though she weren't graceless enough awake, we have to watch her, from the point of view of her new husband as he sits fully clothed at her bedside, while she tosses fitfully in her sleep.

LENNY and Lila honeymoon in Miami Beach (largely, one feels, so they can see replicas of how they'll look in the "forty or fifty years" that Lila senselessly harps on their spending together) where, his wife confined to their hotel room from the first day because of the sunburn, Lenny meets a flirtatious Fitzgeraldian golden girl from Minnesota, Kelly Corcoran, with whom he is so instantly smitten as to determine to rid himself of his new bride even before the honeymoon is over. He does, and lights out for a frigid reception in the Midwest; and, for a while, it looks like the film, after spending its first half humiliating Lila, will spend its second humiliating Lenny, a CCNY *shmuck* vainly aspiring to conquer an all-American campus queen.

Up until the point in the film at which Lila is dumped, *The Heartbreak Kid* seemed to me (apart from Charles Grodin's expert comic performance as Lenny, and Cybill Shepherd's silky embodiment of the object of his desire) neither particularly distinguished nor particularly likable; what one sees in it soon after, however, is something I tend, given the formula-ridden character of most movies, to value highly: the capacity of a film to shift gears, and surprise us. For just as one fears that Lenny is going to have his head handed to him by one of the bull-necked jocks by whom Kelly is constantly surrounded, the worm turns with Bilko-like aplomb, and the film itself suddenly changes direction. And one sees that Lenny's talents as a manic liar, revealed earlier when he invents excuses to leave Lila alone in their hotel room, are born not merely of nervousness but of nerve, and bespeak real resources of daring and cunning.

From then on, the film becomes a much funnier one about Lenny's hustling triumph over the adamant objections of Kelly's father to Lenny's pursuit of her ("Now here's my deal," Lenny approaches him); but the movie still has another twist in store. At the wedding reception which closes the film, we watch Lenny move from one cluster of guests to the next, discussing his business prospects, hustling them all (though his attitude remains indistinguishable from sincerity even, one feels, to himself) with glib talk on topics ranging from "ecology" to tear gas ("there's a lot of money in tear gas") as the situations dictate. And much as in the final shot of *The Graduate* (a film *The Heartbreak Kid* in several ways resembles), where the expressionless faces of the couple on the bus widen the perspective to suggest that the young lovers, in attaining young love, may not have attained everything, so, too, does the mood of *The Heartbreak Kid* in this last sequence change from one of ebullience to something akin to emptiness, the perspective widening but to embrace . . . what?

It's easier to say what it is not: it isn't any *Room at the Top* sentimentality about the emptiness of the "good life" to which Lenny has gained entry. Despite the change in faith and social setting, the two wedding ceremonies which open and close the film are virtually interchangeable (at both there is small talk, and a band playing "Close to You"); and Kelly, though there is a clear indication that having her is of somewhat less importance to Lenny than wanting and acquiring her, remains, whatever her shallowness, infinitely more attractive and desirable than Lila. *The Heartbreak Kid* was adapted from a story by Bruce Jay Friedman which is characteristically nothing more than a joke moving toward its punchline, and scripted by Neil Simon whose contribution seems largely to have been that of fleshing out the main joke with a number of subsidiary gags; and the closing mood of the film seems beyond either of them. Maybe I'm wrong in what I attribute to whom; it seems to me, however, of no little significance that a film consisting of the elements of this one was in fact directed by a Jewish mother, Elaine May, with her actual daughter in the role of the scorned Lila (whose big scene

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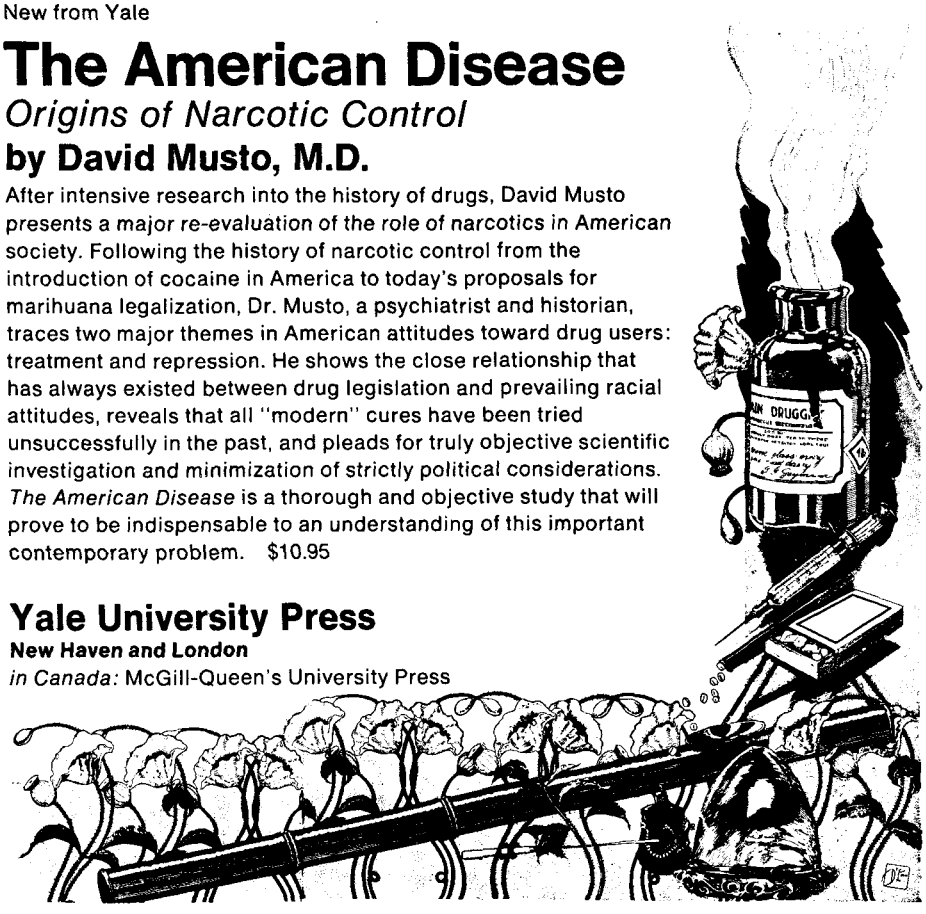

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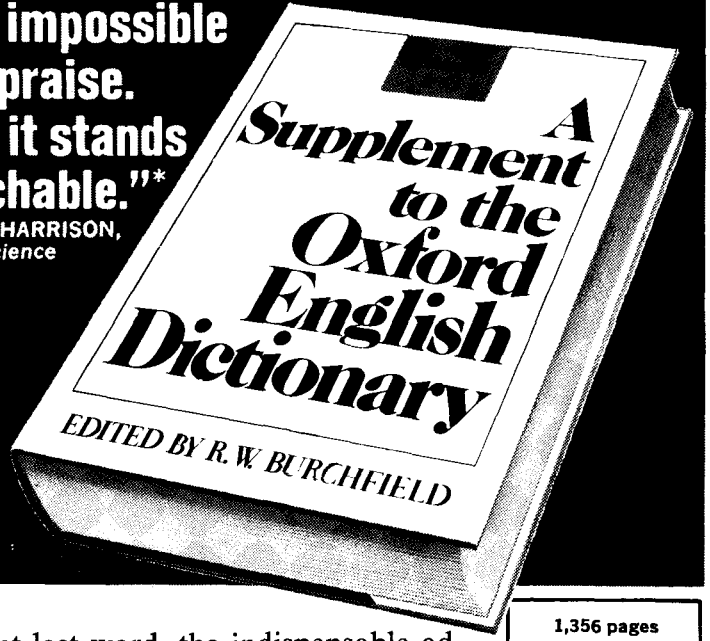

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is played while she stifles her urge to vomit a lobster dinner with which Lenny has stuffed her before he breaks the news he is leaving).

THE emptiness one feels at the end of *The Heartbreak Kid* seems to come not from the milieu, but rather from within Lenny himself, the gifted hustler suddenly revealed to be operating on nothing but hustle. At the end, Lenny, having gone through everyone else at the wedding reception, sits with a group of restless children, and incongruously hustles them with his standard line of patter; when Lenny asks their age, one of them says he is ten years old, and, a vacant look passing over his face, Lenny muses, "I was ten." It is an epitome of how fast and far the film has moved from Neil Simon's humor that the standard "I-was-ten-once" gag is skirted, and what one is left with instead is Lenny's incredulous contemplation of the distance he has traveled from being ten to being at that moment there, a journey on which he's shed all baggage. But what baggage has been shed, besides Lila? (At neither wedding ceremony or anywhere else in the film is there a sign of one of Lenny's relations, except for the lawyer—a cousin or uncle, I forget which—whom he consults briefly in divesting himself of Lila.) This is a film in which, for all that one feels it couldn't be other than by and about Jews, the word "Jew" is not, to my recollection, spoken once; even Kelly's father's obdurate resistance to Lenny as a prospective son-in-law seems curiously without discernible anti-Semitic content. Yet though there is no sense that Kelly's Waspishness is in itself what Lenny desires in her, there is little doubt it is the condition which makes possible those qualities in her he finds desirable; she is, as even the best of all possible Lilas could never be, the all-American dream girl. It would be horrible to think of Lila as the sole content of Lenny's cultural heritage, the residue of his tradition; and yet the hollow sensation one is left with at the end feels like just that. It feels like deracination.

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Books in Review

Intellectuals and Power

ON THE DEMOCRATIC IDEA IN AMERICA. By IRVING KRISTOL. *Harper & Row. 149 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by JOSIAH LEE AUSPITZ

IRVING KRISTOL's collection of essays, lionized in the *Wall Street Journal*, vilified in the *New York Review of Books*, and discussed critically only in the *National Review*, has received scant attention elsewhere in the many months since its publication. This is surprising, since the republication of these eight pieces should have been noteworthy as a news event alone. Mr. Kristol has emerged in recent years as the most politically influential man of letters writing on American public policy from the perspective of the generalist insider. In part, this is by virtue of his co-editorship of the *Public Interest*, the leading American policy-oriented quarterly. In part, it derives from this very collection of essays, which are sufficiently short, thoughtful, readable, and polemical to command the attention of major decision-makers in government, business, and the foundations. This book, for example, has reportedly been purchased in bulk for the White House, where it was read by the President and members of his speech-writing and domestic-policy staffs.

Had they nothing else to recommend them, Kristol's essays should have provoked comment merely as a way of saying something about the audience to which they have appealed. But they do have something else to recommend them: they are astute, heterodox, and sharp-tongued. They contain, moreover, a coherent, if not always consistent, argument that deserves serious attention.

To be sure, Kristol does not always make it easy. He cannot resist a polemical *bon mot*, even when it is unfair. And his witticisms are often so vivid and ungenerous as to blot out of one's mind the judicious theses he is trying to propound. Moreover, since his natural form is the forensic essay, his terminology changes as he redeploys his arsenal of insights to meet new opponents. Yet he does have a coherent set of insights which, taken together, form an important argument that provides the impetus to all the pieces in the book. Whether he is discussing the decline of republican morality, the corruption of the university, the moral inadequacy of corporate capitalism, the misinterpretation of American history, the misguided moralism of the peace movement, the utopianism of the American electorate, or the need to control pornography, what Kristol is really talking about is the failure of American intellectuals to exercise responsibly their enormous power in society.

Yes, power. Mr. Kristol is not one to denigrate the power of intellectuals or of ideas. It is in ideas that the patterns of authority in a society reside, and to exercise influence over them is every bit as important a social trust as to influence the disposition of society's capital wealth. It is Kristol's thesis that American intellectuals are defaulting on their social responsibilities at a time when the country needs them most. The argument which unites his essays may be reduced to three points.

First, there is a crisis in the democratic idea in America—that is, a crisis in our political values and ideology. On the most basic level this consists in a degeneration from the animating spirit of the Founding Fathers. Kristol is not lamenting a loss of faith in liberty or equality, an erosion of the rights which the Founders saw as inalienable, or any "constitutional crisis" in the institutions they set up. On the contrary, he sees the letter of their basic laws and ideals kept slavishly intact. It is their animating spirit that is gone. The Founding Fathers had a sense of craftsmanship that related the design of institutions to underlying social realities. They did not deduce their laws directly from first principles; rather, they tried to combine a sense of such principles with a careful study of previous constitutions and the fitting of these to the history and mores of various peoples. They were, then, not ideologists but praxiologists, students of human action and conduct. The import of their laws cannot be understood without a knowledge of the 18th-century social reality to which they made reference.

Kristol argues that the salient elements of their age are missing in our own. Instead of an agrarian culture we have an urban one; in place of a public-spirited gentry we have managers and maximizers of bureaucratic interests; in place of a religiously motivated, private benevolence we have an ethic of competition mitigated by a professionalized welfare state. The great moral change has been in the decline of republican virtue—the essential glue in any liberal democracy. "Republican morality" entails a notion of self-sacrifice for the common good, a sturdy patriotism, and an obligation toward voluntarism and public service. The French, who often lacked these things, coined a word for them: *civisme*. The demise of our own related term, civics, as a subject of instruction in our schools, is a symptom of the degeneration Kristol sees. To him our institutions and ideals are drifting in a moral void. Hence, Kristol concludes in the first and best essay in the book:* "The challenge to our urban democracy is to evolve a set of values and a conception of democracy that can function as the equivalent of the 'republican morality' of yesteryear."

This is not a job for engineers, economists, lawyers, or literary critics. To evolve a set of values, insofar as it is at all susceptible to

JOSIAH LEE AUSPITZ, *a former president of the Ripon Society, is a teaching fellow in government at Harvard.*

* "Urban Civilization and Its Discontents," which appeared in COMMENTARY in July 1970.

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conscious effort, is a question not of expertise but of moral example and spiritual leadership. And it is in this context that Kristol focuses on the American intellectual. Regardless of what a man's professional training may be, he achieves the status of intellectual by an ability with general ideas that enables him to be a "moral guide and critic to the world." He is a "writing cleric," a leader of opinion, a shaper of ideals. Kristol's polemics against "the intellectuals" and "the intellectual class" should not obscure the fact that he believes their role to be crucial. It is the second point of his argument that the American intellectual has been formed in a way that systematically unfits him for this role.

To begin with, as a modern Western man the intellectual is heir to a tradition of iconoclasm and skepticism. He has difficulty being constructive about anything except in the context of tearing something else down. As an American, the intellectual is heir to a Protestant variant of Hebraism that emphasizes prophetic confrontation and direct, personal revelation. He thus habitually defines himself as the adversary of temporal power. He can understand the ideals of the Founding Fathers only as a revealed ideology, disembodied from institutions and social realities, as a "transcendental populism" with which to beat politicians over the head. As a 20th-century writer, the intellectual is a member of a large class, supported mainly by universities, foundations, and publications, which has its own class interests that are distinguishable from the pursuit of truth. He is led by the aspirations of his class to undermine constituted authority. Since "the intellectual class" is large, it often behaves as a mob and tempts its leaders into a peculiarly intellectual form of demagoguery that is especially evident, Kristol feels, in discussions of foreign policy.

Third, Kristol presents glimmerings of an alternative role. He likes the pragmatic policy intellectuals: Arthur Schlesinger, John P. Roche, Eric Goldman are three he names in a 1965 essay. He quotes with approval the non-utopian side of Thomas More's famous dialogue of counsel in *Utopia*: "If evil persons cannot be quite rooted out, and if you cannot correct habitual attitudes as you wish, you must not therefore abandon the commonwealth. . . . You must strive to guide policy indirectly, so that you make the best of things, and what you cannot turn to good, at least make less bad." He proposes a general criterion for the restoration of the spirit of the Founding Fathers:

> The results of the political process and of the exercise of individual freedom—the distribution of power, privilege, and property—must also be seen as in some profound sense expressive of the values that govern the lives of individuals. An idea of self-government, if it is to be viable, must encompass both the private and the public sectors. If it does not—if the principles that organize public life seem to have little relation to those that shape private lives—you have "alienation," *anomie*, and a melting away of established principles of authority.

ALL THIS suggests that the American intellectual needs to reform himself. Instead of his schizoid vacillation between prophecy and professionalism, between inner light and expertise, between alienation from the Establishment and manipulation of it, the intellectual might attempt the conscious reconstruction of his own and his country's traditions. This Kristol calls a project of "conservative reform": to bring public example and private virtue into an appearance of harmony. It will, he sees, demand a reinterpretation of American history to reflect the spirit of cautious craftsmanship that underlies the development of our institutions; it will require an end to the empty use of the labels "liberalism" and "conservatism" as if they represented relevant or even systematic doctrines; and it will, above all, require an unaccustomed prudence in the way in which the intellectual relates his ideals to social reality. Simply stated, the thrust of Kristol's argument is that there is an erosion of the American spirit, that this brings the intellectual into a position of responsibility for which he is ill-equipped, and that to fulfill his role he will have to begin by reforming himself.

I call this the thrust of Kristol's argument not because it is the subject of any single essay but because it gives coherence to all the essays and to the pattern of his allusions to political theory and contemporary events. It represents, I think, Kristol's better intellectual self. And the first criticism one should make of him is that his better self does not always prevail. His own self-reformation is incomplete. He seems more comfortable exposing the folly of his presumed opponents than in really undoing them by proposing a better way. Only in his essay on pornography does he persevere to argue an actual programmatic alternative. Elsewhere, he is a lively exploder of the myths of the 1960's, a revisionist. His own criticism of the revisionist historians he admires thus applies equally to himself:

> . . . in the end I have to conclude that even they are curiously unsatisfying. They trouble me because they are, precisely, "revisionists" in their attitude and perspective. That is to say, they are excellent in pointing out the shortcomings of the standard, "progressive" account. . . . But it is never clear to me what they would put in its place—or whether, indeed, they really want to go so far as to put anything new in its place. . . . Such revisionism leaves me with the feeling that many important things—perhaps even the most important things—remain to be said.

It took no small presence of mind to be a revisionist of Kristol's sort in the 1960's. In the 1970's, however, one should demand a bit more from him and from the growing number of those who will take their cues from his writings. Given Kristol's position, it is essential, as a start, that he come to terms with the meaning of the label "intellectual." Is it to be used as a rhetorical straw man, as a sociological designation, or as a noble calling badly practiced? Kristol uses it in all three ways, but most often as a pejorative for unnamed writers who disagree with him. Such rhetorical use

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shows surprising clumsiness, for it brings Kristol's own perspective on himself into question. He is no less an intellectual than "the intellectuals" he attacks. Their approach is radical and uncompromising; his is traditionalist and moderate. Their stance is prophetic; his is rabbinical. They often claim to follow Marx, the Declaration of Independence, and the Utopian side of Thomas More; he knows the compromising side of More, the Constitution, and Aristotle. But surely the label "intellectual" is the wrong petard for him to use against them. Kristol's own criticisms would have greater depth and clarity were he to define explicitly his own role. Does he want to be a gadfly to the gadflies, or a guide to the perplexed?

Perhaps the best place for an admirer of Aristotle to begin would be in a distinction between forensic and deliberative rhetoric. The former has as its object victory, the latter the clarification of rational choice. In the former one deals with social reality only in order to discredit one's opponents, in the latter to chart alternative courses of action. Kristol's essays move indecisively between these two rhetorical forms. Is it unfair to hold him to the higher, deliberative standard? Not if it is the standard to which he holds others. His own voice would carry a weight proportional to its influence were he to give us a better sense of what he himself would regard as responsible reform in American society.

Jewish Socialism

THE JEWISH BUND IN RUSSIA: FROM ITS ORIGINS TO 1905. By HENRY J. TOBIAS. *Stanford University Press. 409 pp. $16.50.*

Reviewed by BERNARD K. JOHNPOLL

A NOT uncommon political phenomenon, cutting across a variety of national lines, is that of the revolutionary movement around which there evolves an aura of romance and myth. The Russians, for example, have their *Narodnaya Volya*, the British their Chartists, the Spaniards their anarcho-syndicalist CNT-FAI, the Italians their Red Shirts, and the Americans their Industrial Workers of the World. To be sure, the actual accomplishments of these groups rarely measure up to the legend. In some instances they have degenerated into "populist" movements representing the worst aspects of their national cultures: *Narodnaya Volya*, in its waning days, became an open defender of pogroms; and the enlightened nationalism of the Red Shirts helped pave the way for Mussolini's jingoistic Fascism. Other groups, by their excesses, can be held responsible for bringing about even more repressive regimes than the ones they opposed: thus the CNT-FAI's terrorist tactics afforded an excuse for Franco's successful counterrevolution and dictatorship. As for the rest, these generally have been political failures, whose contributions to their societies are insignificant except insofar as they have held forth hope to the oppressed, as well as, in some cases, enriching the literature of their native land—a lesser, or greater, achievement, depending on one's point of view.

Outstanding in this last category is the General Jewish Workers' Union of Lithuania, Poland, and Russia, more familiarly known as the Bund. For though the Bund accomplished little in the way of practical melioration for its misery-ridden constituency, during the twenty-five years of its existence in Russia it succeeded notably in sustaining the spirits of its followers, and in inspiring an enduring body of literature.

The Bund was born and flourished in the Russia of late 19th- and early 20th centuries, where Jews, in contrast to other nationalities inhabiting the vast Czarist territories, constituted a despised minority, forced by imperial ukase to live as *untermenschen* in the borderlands of empire. Restricted to trade and commerce, or to demeaning labor, the Jews, unlike their Gentile neighbors, the Poles, the Letts, the

BERNARD K. JOHNPOLL, *a new contributor, is professor of political science at the State University of New York at Albany, and the author of* The Politics of Futility, Pacifist's Progress, *and the forthcoming* The Impossible Dream.

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Ukrainians (who had strong historical ties to their lands), were everywhere regarded as aliens. Even more fundamentally, they were set apart by dint of their uncompromising allegiance to their religion.

The social and economic persecution to which the Jews were subject, described in succinct detail by Professor Tobias in a short introductory chapter to the present study, led many Jews—particularly after the repressions and pogroms of the 1880's—to a search for an immediate solution to their plight. The effort took a variety of forms, primary among them emigration—to America, South Africa, or other Western countries, and, in much smaller numbers, to Palestine; it also took the form of an attraction to the secret radical movements that had recently sprung up and that were aimed at overthrowing the Czarist regime. But though Jews participated in these early radical movements, the movements themselves, in their ideological vagueness, seemed designed to appeal more to an agrarian population than to *shtetl* or urbanized Jews. Not until the late 1880's and and early 90's, with the emergence of the Socialist movement and its clearer program for reform, did Jewish intellectuals in any significant number join the leftist ranks; and it was in the fertile soil of Socialism that the Bund first took root.

THE early Jewish Socialist movement, centered as it was in Vilna, the intellectual hub of East European Jewry, was made up almost entirely of intelligentsia who paid scant attention to the actual, day-to-day problems of the Jewish workers. Their main concern was the formulation of theory, to be hammered out in endless debates (through whose maze Professor Tobias proves an excellent guide). Moreover, the Socialist intellectuals kept a linguistic distance from the Jewish masses, conducting their affairs exclusively in Russian rather than Yiddish. Altogether, their outlook was distinctly universalistic, directed to the alleviation of the ills of the empire as a whole and not merely its Jewish segment. Gradually, however, there came about a shift to particularism, sparked in large measure by the development of a Yiddish literature of consequence and the attendant upsurge of pride in the Yiddish language. Thus, despite opposition on the part of some members of the movement, increasingly the Jewish Socialists "moved further from a concern with the Russian movement," as Professor Tobias writes, "and closer to a concern with the fate of the Jewish workers around them."

The "Yiddishization" of the Jewish Socialist movement, proceeding apace with the recognition that the problems of the Jewish proletariat were not completely coincident with those of the Russian masses, led eventually to the formation, in Vilna in 1897, of the Bund. But even this new-found awareness of the uniqueness of the Jewish situation did not result in immediate action. Indeed, it was not until 1901 that the Bund, at its fourth Congress, paid attention to the special needs of the Jewish workers; and another four years—a period marked by much soul-searching on the part of the Bund leadership over how to reconcile national consciousness with class consciousness—were to elapse before the Bund fully developed its program of national cultural autonomy.

IF THE Jewish national question created internal problems within the ranks of the Bund, its relations with the faction-ridden Russian Social-Democratic Workers party, which it had been instrumental in forming in 1898, led to difficulties of another sort. The Bund was by far the largest Socialist organization within the RSDWP, a fact that aroused the jealous ire of the other groups comprising the party. Moreoever, after 1901 its program diverged from that of the Russian Socialists, for the Bund was now not merely another organization with a Socialist ideology but also a movement aimed at national cultural self-determination. It thus insisted upon a new form of organization for the RSDWP, demanding a switch from the centralized control then in effect to a federative set-up. The result was a polemical assault on the Bund by no less an eminence than Lenin; the antagonism reached a climax at the 1903

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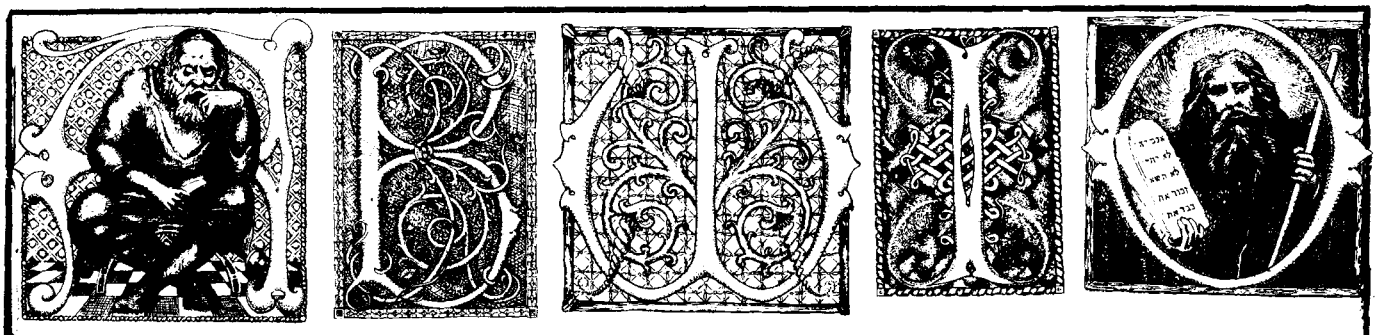

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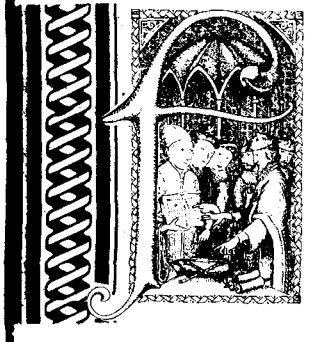

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Congress, where the RSDWP split into Menshevik and Bolshevik factions, with the Bund remaining outside both.

The details of this factional maneuvering are among the most intricate, and saddening, in leftist history. They include alliances within alliances, petty bickerings under a mask of theoretical debate, acts of betrayal and self-delusion. The struggle united Martov, the Menshevik, with Lenin, the Bolshevik, against the Bund, and then opposed them to each other. In the end, all hope for unity among Russia's Socialists was effectively destroyed and the groundwork laid for Lenin's destruction of the non-Bolshevik Socialist movement after the November revolution of 1917.

PROFESSOR TOBIAS'S retelling of these events is comprehensive, intelligent, and readily accessible even to the non-specialist reader. He is somewhat less successful in his account of the disagreement between the Bund and the Labor Zionist movement, a key point in any consideration of the Bund but one to which he assigns insufficient importance (as well as insufficient space). For if there was one movement which, more than any other, competed for the same constituency as the Bund, it was Labor Zionism. Both pitched their appeals to the Jewish working class, but while agreeing on Socialism as the answer to the problems of the proletariat, they fought vehemently over their respective solutions to the Jewish question. To the end, their relationship remained one of mutual hostility. Professor Tobias contents himself with a brief discussion of the matter, preferring to regard the struggle between the two Jewish labor movements as a mere incident within the context of the Bund's general relations with the larger Jewish community. Yet in the long run, particularly insofar as Jewish interests were concerned, this contest was certainly more crucial than that which took place within the RSDWP.

It is regrettable, too, that Professor Tobias chooses to end his story in the year 1905. The first eight years of the Bund's existence, years of ideological turbulence, were its most interesting, but it would have been helpful to have some discussion of the Bund's subsequent role as a rallying point around which Jews could unite in their struggle against an oppressive social system—a role which continued, in Russia, until the Bund's suppression by Lenin in 1922 (and in Poland, by Hitler and Stalin in 1939). Yet all this notwithstanding, Professor Tobias is to be richly commended for his valuable study of a once-vital Jewish movement, one which despite political failure made a mighty contribution to Jewish life and achieved thereby an undeniable historical importance.

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The First Futurist

MARINETTI: SELECTED WRITINGS. Edited, with an Introduction, by R. W. FLINT. Translated by R. W. FLINT and ARTHUR A. COPPOTELLI. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 366 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by ARTHUR A. COHEN

FUTURISM began as a one-man movement of revolution in the traditional relations of the artist and society. The poet, painter, musician, architect, dramatist, *cinéaste* was bidden by Filippo Tomasso Marinetti, the founder of Futurism, and by the followers he quickly acquired, to destroy the past, smash the antique, empty the museums of the mind, and step out boldly into the world of the 20th century—a world created, in Marinetti's view, by the machine and the machine gun.

Marinetti was first and foremost a publicist. His declamatory style, his turgid but powerful manifestoes, his love of posing and postur-

ARTHUR A. COHEN's *novel,* In the Days of Simon Stern, *a section of which appeared in our November 1972 issue, will be published next month by Random House.*

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ing, his penchant for confrontations and fisticuffs, all these inspired in a younger generation of Italian artists the conviction that Italy was not dead, that it was not at all, as Marinetti had implied, a nation of museum keepers but a strong, inventive, courageous, and, above all, modern people. Futurism began by addressing all the world, but became, finally, a movement of national cleansing; originally aimed at inspiriting artists throughout Europe, it ended with Marinetti offering praise and adoration to Benito Mussolini, with his "square crushing jaws [and] scornful jutting lips that spit with defiance and swagger on everything slow, pedantic, and finicking. . . ."

THE *First Futurist Manifesto* was published in February 1909, on the front page of the French newspaper *Le Figaro*. Prior to that time Marinetti, son of a millionaire father, had shuttled back and forth between Paris and Italy, turning out poetry, novellas, and plays in French and Italian, and editing the major Italian symbolist journal, *Poesia*. Coming as he did out of the Symbolist movement, whose program had similarly been announced in *Le Figaro* by Jean Moreas in 1886, Marinetti was keenly aware of the alienation and rootlessness experienced by poets like Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Rimbaud, avant-garde artists who were from the bourgeoisie but not of it, and who were misused, misunderstood, and ultimately humiliated by the class that had produced them. (This of course could scarcely be said of the avant-garde today, as Hilton Kramer has recently pointed out in these pages.*) Marinetti himself felt constantly humiliated by French snobbism, belittled and victimized, and in the *First Futurist Manifesto*, as well as in all his subsequent activities, he set himself the task of enraging the artist's traditional oppressor, the bourgeois establishment. Ironically, yet in a manner that was to become typical of many a later movement that had Futurism as its spiritual model, until rather late in the game Marinetti chose for the setting of his attacks the traditional forums supplied by the bourgeoisie for its own recreation: the theater, the concert hall, the art gallery and museum, the lecture podium.

As a rallying doctrine of art, Futurism could describe an aesthetic but not really enforce it. The movement catalyzed some excellent painters (Balla, Carrà, Severini, Boccioni), an architect of distinction (Sant'Elia), a composer or two of talent, like Pratella who anticipated John Cage, and—much the most influential innovation of the movement—an original typography and graphics. The Futurists briefly converted Apollinaire, infuriated the Delaunays, entranced Mayakovsky, influenced the German Expressionists, appealed to D. H. Lawrence, interested James Joyce, angered Wyndham Lewis. Marinetti himself wrote about concrete poetry and about cinematic and dramatic techniques which anticipated Godard, the theater of the absurd, and the Happening. Yet what comes through most clearly in all this is not a sense of cultural achievement but a denial of cultural values altogether, in favor of publicity and the projection of self—and ultimately of violence. "Futurism," Marinetti declared in an interview in 1911, "is only promise, or, if you prefer, the exaltation of originality and of personality; the rest is only argument, trumpeting, and blows of the fist."

MARINETTI loved the big phrase, and had he had more power, he would have loved the big lie. "A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath . . . is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*." "We want to free this land from its smelly gangrene of professors, archaeologists, ciceroni, and antiquarians. . . ." "I want expensive playthings to smash . . . cities to crumble, human anthills to kick aside." "War—Futurism intensified—obliges us to march and not to rot in libraries and reading rooms." Sentiments like these had only to await the advent of large power and massive deception to be transformed into the slogans of barbarism.

* "The Age of the Avant-Garde," October 1972.

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In his Jefferson lecture, *Mind in the Modern World,** Lionel Trilling has indirectly accounted for the attractiveness of Futurism in its day, as well as the flurry of interest which has attended the publication now of Marinetti's *Selected Writings*—even in an edition as indifferent and as unrepresentative as the present one. The struggle of the mind to achieve clarity, comprehensiveness, and a resolution of the dilemmas and confusions of modern life has for some time now been regarded as too plodding, too indecisive, too dull-witted an enterprise to be seriously pursued. To assault traditional culture by the patient critique of its assumptions and by the laying of new foundations is to assume that very continuity which antagonists of culture seem most intent upon denying. Movements like Futurism, essentially impatient, want it over and done with instantly. Marinetti was always calling for the burning, the torturing, the persecution of the slow, the plodding, the dull; in his rhetoric of dissent the great cultural foot-draggers were not so much the bourgeoisie or the masses as the intellectuals, the traditionalists, the thinkers and philosophers who saw no speedy way to the millennium.

UNLIKE Dadaism, whose politics was one of ironic exhaustion, Futurism called for the apocalypse. It would fall to society's artists to rescue the masses from mediocrity and show them the real truth of modern life by noise in music, by movement in painting, steel, and concrete, by energy in cities, by simultaneity in language. But like other modish eschatologies, Futurism achieved its time of artistic consummation too quickly (although no quicker than it wanted to). Then, seeing that the world was not changed, that the revolution had not occurred, that the masses had not been moved, it capitulated to the power that seemed most likely to impose its vision by force. So many Dadaists and Surrealists became Communists, so many Futurists became Fascists, and so many others, hard-working until the end, beyond fashion and ideology, fell victim to both.

* Viking, 41 pp., $2.50.

History's Victims

A WOMAN NAMED SOLITUDE. By ANDRE SCHWARZ-BART. Translated by RALPH MANHEIM. *Atheneum. 179 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT ALTER

AFTER the shattering conclusion of *The Last of the Just* (1959), it was hard to imagine what more, if anything, André Schwarz-Bart would be able to write. In the mid-60's, he announced that he and his West Indian wife, Simone, were planning to collaborate on a seven-volume series of novels about the blacks of Guadeloupe and Martinique from the late 18th century to the present (the project as a whole has since been abandoned). One jointly written novel, *Un plat de porc aux bananes vertes,* was published in France in 1967, and though it has a certain gritty persuasiveness in rendering the retrospective life-experience of a West Indian woman in a French home for the aged, it seems static and imaginatively circumscribed after Schwarz-Bart's powerful novel on the Holocaust. Now Schwarz-Bart has written alone a short novel about a mulatto slave-woman (a historical personage) who was executed after a slave uprising in Guadeloupe in 1802, and it is, quite simply, an astonishing book.

A Woman Named Solitude manages to be simultaneously one of the most exquisitely wrought lyric novels of recent years and an utterly convincing representation of the reality of historical suffering. The two achievements, which may sound contradictory, are in fact inseparably linked. The texture of Schwarz-Bart's prose, beautifully rendered in Ralph Manheim's translation, is "poetic" throughout but never merely decorative, which is to say that it performs one of the primary functions of poetry, to make the strange familiar, to en-

ROBERT ALTER *is professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at the University of California at Berkeley.*

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able us to feel the imponderable experience of another on our own pulses. *A Woman Named Solitude* might be described as the study of a violated but heroically persistent perspective, that of black Africans torn from the organic wholeness of their traditional world by the white enslaver; and the novel's vivid metaphorical language, constantly rearranging the elements of experience in unexpected patterns, makes this perspective ours as we read.

SOLITUDE'S story, in a wonderfully effective strategy, is preceded by a kind of prologue in which the novelist portrays the life in Africa of Bayangumay, Solitude's mother, up to the time she is seized by whites, transported from her native village, and flung into the stinking airless hell of a slave ship. Before the irruption of these horrors, Bayangumay lives an African idyll which is a strange mixture of magic and song, finely etched in figurative language, where wind-bent trees lean "like groups of dancing girls frozen in mid-flight," where children speak to each other "under a little green moon as taut as a bow," where words shared are cast negligently into the air and fall "with the imponderable precision of a dream, like those long flat stones that skip so well, rising and falling on still water." The imponderable precision of a dream is just the quality Schwarz-Bart's striking similes give this narrative that meditates on the wavering borders between dream and reality as the dream is invaded by a historical nightmare. Bayangumay's uncomprehending perception of the murder of her husband before her eyes by the slave-traders is not just an adroit trick in narrative viewpoint but a demonstration that will be continued to the end of the novel of how a mind shaped by the cyclical rhythms of agricultural life and tribal custom is endlessly baffled by the implements, values, motives of the white man's alien world: "Then came a shattering sound like the sound of thunder in the dry season, when the sky cracks like a kernel of maize in the coals. Falling down on his knees, old Dyadyu thrust his spear forward and lay down on the ground to sleep, resting his head on the crook of his elbow as men do by the fireside after days of plowing, sowing, circumcision, marriage or funeral, when everything that was to be done has been done."

The ocean-crossing is then represented as a nightmare of radical disorientation so extreme that Bayangumay begins to lose her sense of herself as a human being, almost convinced in the dark hold that she has turned into some kind of odious worm. The daughter she gives birth to on the plantation in Guadeloupe will grow up to share her terror of the annihilation of self. Solitude, barely an adolescent, becomes what the other slaves call a zombie, alternating between catatonic passivity and outbursts of animal ferocity. Her insanity, however, presented in its own immanent logic, becomes a paradoxical form of sanity, a strategy of inner survival historically justified by the madness of the white man's world in which she is captive. In any case, it is seen less as insanity than as a permanent condition of *dépaysment,* that French concept that suggests both disorientation and being cut off from one's homeland. Again and again, images of floating in space, of shimmering and spinning, are used to render Solitude's experience. She feels herself "falling into the sky like a dead fish"; she is "like a soap bubble, revolving in the mansions of the sky, silently mirroring everything about her"; even the words that come out of her mouth—she speaks, after all, the language of the enslaver—seem detached from her, "mirrors that fell at her feet, shattering her reflection." The most embracing image of *dépaysment* is given to Solitude by the leader of a group of runaway slaves she joins: the real curse, he says, is the terrible mystery of white thought; those who enter into it are lost forever, reduced to "shadows, puppets in the white man's dream."

THE paradox of lyric beauty in an imaginative confrontation with slavery makes particular sense because Schwarz-Bart has chosen to represent the moral outrage of enslavement as a drama of conscious-

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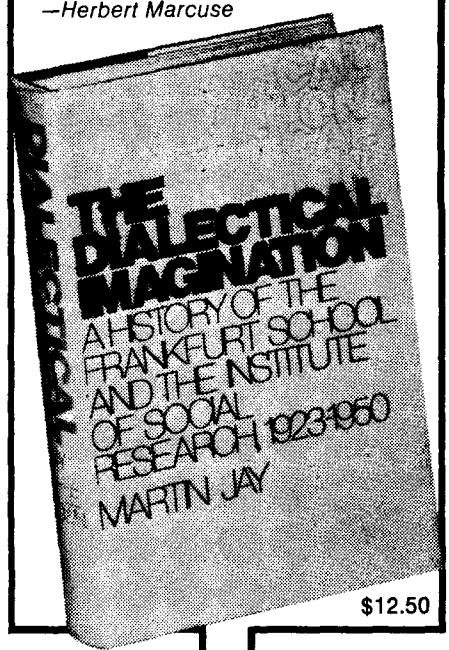
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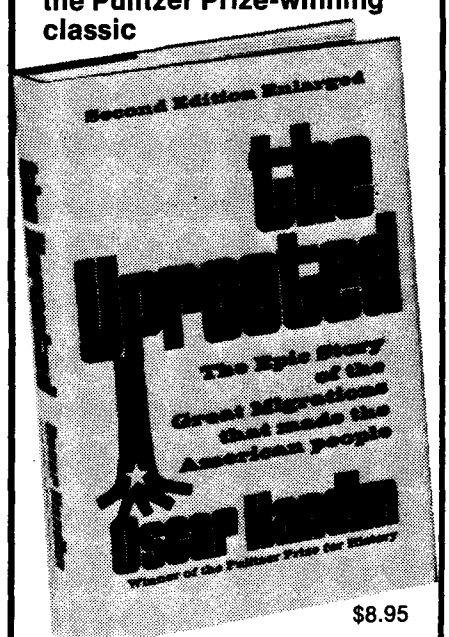

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ness. The artistic tact of this choice is admirable. I suspect that over the last few years our collective sensibilities have simply been numbed by the deluge in film and fiction of what Stanley Kaufmann once called "the pornography of violence." In *A Woman Named Solitude,* the chains and whips, the sundry instruments of maiming and torture, the sexual despoliations, are merely alluded to quickly in passing, in a matter-of-fact tone that is far more shocking than the conventional wallowing in gore of other contemporary writers. In any case, what one feels more poignantly than the references to physical torture is the continuous presence in the novel of a consciousness pitifully deformed by slavery yet doggedly persisting in its effort to be itself, something other than a shadow in the white man's dream.

In this regard, Solitude achieves a kind of confirmation in the last third of the novel, when she is hiding out in the mountains with a guerrilla band of runaways after the French Republic has revoked the short-lived decree of emancipation. The luminous days and nights, the silvery mountain crags, the living flow of the River Goyave, the visual beauty of the natural world "rising and falling in multicolored droplets that caressed the back of your eyes," all give her a sense of being intensely alive and human outside the inscrutable strangeness of white thought. The imagery of shimmering reflection, which had earlier been used to convey Solitude's unstable sense of self, is now part of her perception of the beauty of the world around her that nothing can take from her. When she is led to her execution, she pauses to drink at a fountain, and it is here, in the last full moments of her life, and not in her death, that the narrative fittingly concludes. About to die, Solitude takes in the brilliant sunlight, the bright colors of the soldiers' uniforms, the yellow house fronts, and in being at the last so acutely alive, she has clearly transcended the crowd of white faces around her with their alien oppressor's dream: "The things of this world were shrouded in a luminous veil, as fragile and beautiful as the reflections in the water of the Goyave, and even the living bodies seemed clothed in this soft, silken transparency."

In a 1967 interview, Schwarz-Bart said that after the war he had felt that the Holocaust radically isolated the Jews from the rest of mankind in an experience of suffering so profound that it could not be communicated to others. Only after his encounter with West Indians, he went on, did he realize that there might be bridges over the abyss to other islands of suffering, that with all differences recognized, there might still be a universal community of history's victims. The reader of *A Woman Named Solitude* marvels, and wonders, at Schwarz-Bart's unfaltering ability to project himself into another race, another sex, another age. It is only in the last words of the Epilogue that the author of *The Last of the Just* calls attention to his identity. The imaginative visitor, we are told, to the site of the slave rebellion's last stand might almost see human figures arise from the long-moldering ruins—just as other phantoms are said to rise before other travelers at the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto. This last gesture is, I think, a psychologically necessary one for the novelist, and with a little shock it throws a whole added perspective on the story that has been told. Schwarz-Bart in this book has brilliantly solved the problem of writing a novel after the great novel of the Holocaust by using Jewish suffering as a window of perception to the suffering of others. And perhaps by moving from the experience of Jews to that of blacks, he also has notably moved beyond the theologization of victimhood of *The Last of the Just* to the imaginative evocation of how the victim resists, how he survives. It is hard to think of many living novelists who are able to use the novel so convincingly to bear witness for humanity in its harshest historical trials.

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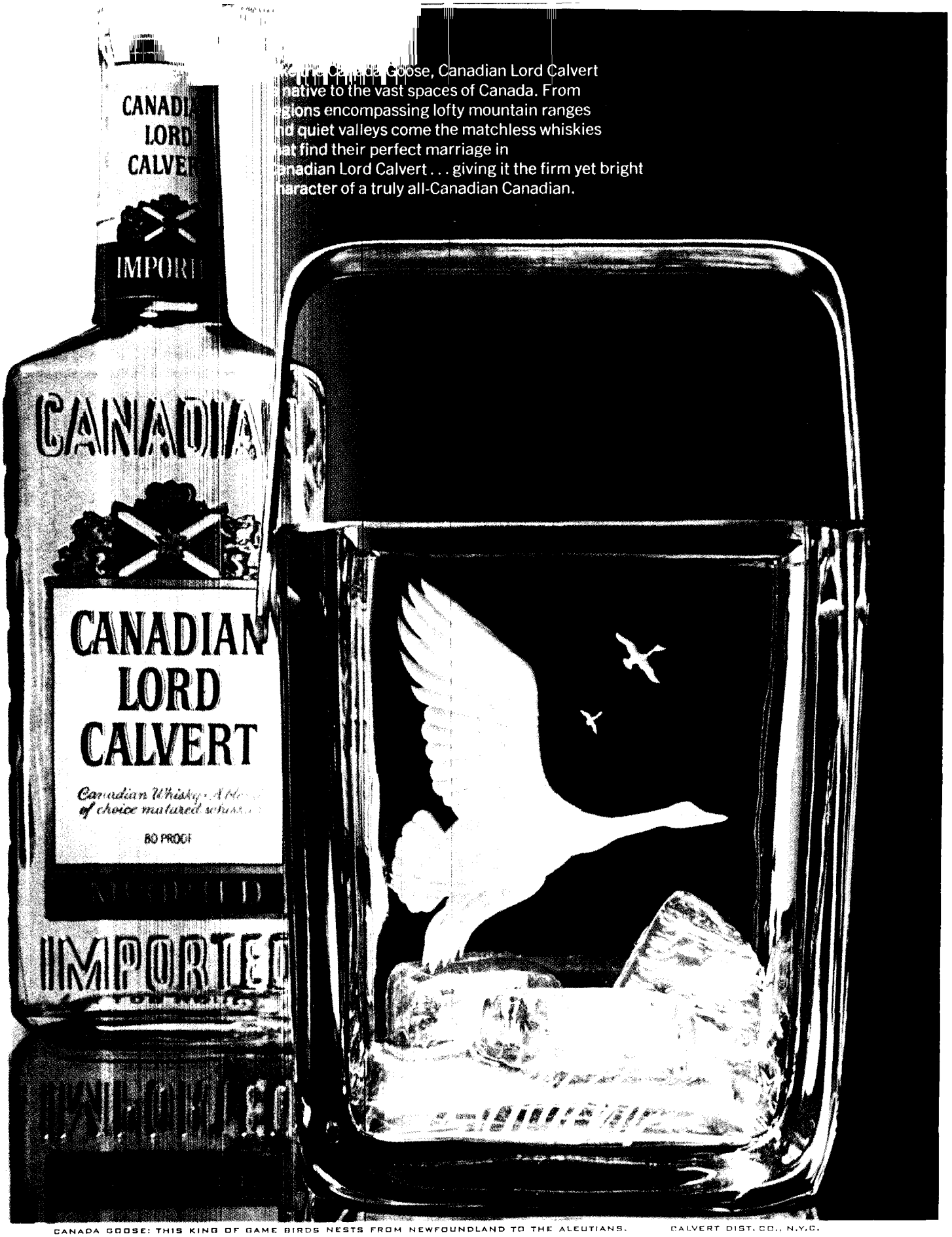

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